









# HOW CRIMINALS ARE CAUGHT

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By Arnold Miles

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## FOREWORD

THE modern police department has several major responsibilities, of which this book treats but one—criminal apprehension. Besides being the core of all police work, catching criminals is the job which comes first to mind when police work is mentioned. And well it should, for it is a fascinating job.

Every one of the cases told in the following pages is a true story taken directly from police annals—only the names are changed—and every one is typical of cases common to every police department everywhere in the United States. For assistance in gathering these cases the author is particularly indebted to Chief Hugh D. Harper of Colorado Springs; Commissioner James P. Allman of Chicago; former Chief O. W. Wilson of Wichita; Chief E. T. Weatherly of Cincinnati; former Sheriff George O'Brien, Walworth County, Wisconsin; and Superintendent Donald F. Stiver, Indiana State Police.

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ARNOLD MILES





## CHAPTER I

### CATCHING THEM IN THE ACT

**I**F THE police had their way, they would know about every crime in advance. They would have as standard equipment a fortune teller to warn them where and when a crime is about to occur, and a magic carpet to take them there in time to prevent it.

Actually, police have a way of turning up and catching a criminal in the act so unexpectedly that it seems as if there must be a trick in it, or unnatural luck. But it is not surprising to anyone who

knows good police work. Catching a criminal is a threefold task. The police must identify the criminal, must arrest him, and must obtain evidence to prove his guilt. When they fail to catch him in the act, these three steps have to be taken one at a time. When he is caught in the act, they are taken all at once, which saves the police a lot of time and trouble.

For this reason, police departments, ever since the keeping of law and order was first put into the hands of professional officers, have been trying with a great deal of success to cut down the time it takes to get to the scene of a crime. No matter what kind of patrol is used—foot or motor, or both—the first thing to be done is to place patrolmen where crime is likely to occur. It is impossible, of course, to place them on the exact spot, but they can be placed in the general neighborhood.

Modern police departments do it in this way: With colored pins the chief spots different kinds of crimes, as they occur, on a map of the city. When he has done this for a year or more he knows where they are most often committed. He also keeps a time record, so that along with the map he has a chart showing, by hour of the day, when each type of crime is most often committed in each section.

By combining the map and the chart he gets an almost perfect guide for placing his men about the city so that, while protecting the community as a whole, they will be concentrated at the proper times in those neighborhoods where they will be needed.

The next problem is to get the patrolman, when a crime does occur, from the general neighborhood to the exact spot. In the old days the only way he could get there was by walking or by taking a streetcar. When automobiles came into use they promised to cut down the time to a tenth, or less, of what it had been. But entirely new systems had to be developed before the promise could be fulfilled. Getting to the scene of a crime means a whole lot more than blasting your way, with siren screaming, through crowded downtown streets and quiet residential avenues.

At first the motorized patrol force was divided roughly into two. Half of the cars were put on the street for general patrol duty. The men in these cars got to the scene of a crime without delay only if they happened along when a citizen was looking for the police or if they chanced to telephone the station just after a crime had been reported there.

The other half of the patrol force was kept in reserve at police headquarters and precinct stations ready for action when a report of a crime came in. These men were idle most of the time, and therefore the system was wasteful of man power. But no better system could be worked out because at that time there was no good method of communication between police station—where the victim usually reported the crime, either in person or by phone—and patrol cars on the street. A patrol car might actually be near the scene of the crime; but there was no way of notifying it, and other cars had to be kept in re-

serve at the station so that one might be sent direct.

A few cities partly overcame this difficulty by putting in a system of police boxes similar to fire-alarm boxes. These served two purposes. By telephoning from them to the station house at regular periods, the patrolman could let his superior know that he was on a certain part of his beat at a certain time; and the superior in turn, by causing a light to blink on top of the box, could call the patrolman to it and tell him about a crime reported in the neighborhood.

This lessened the need for men in reserve at the station house, but it was costly because of the number of boxes required to make sure that a signal from headquarters could be flashed where it could be seen by a patrolman.

It was not until radio was adapted to police needs that the problem was really solved. Radio enables headquarters and patrol cars to keep in touch with each other constantly, so that headquarters can get a car to the scene of a crime without loss of time. Since the patrolmen in the cars are able to receive orders anywhere in the city, there is no need for any of them to be kept in reserve in the stations. Besides these two points in favor of radio there is a third which may surprise you. Radio is cheaper to install and operate than any other system of communication between station house and patrolmen.

These advantages explain why there are so many municipal radio stations, county systems, and state police networks in the United States. The larger cities

and the larger and wealthier counties mostly led the way in trying radio in police work because they could afford to experiment, and the smaller towns and cities followed them when the experiments showed that it was a success.

One-way radio, by which the station could call the car but the car could not call back, came first. Two-way radio was developed soon afterward and is now being installed both by cities which have had no radio system and by cities which have had the one-way system, because it has demonstrated its advantages time after time in the actual catching of criminals.

For instance, in one city which had a one-way system, a patrol car chasing a couple of hold-up men in another car took a chance and stopped at a filling station long enough to tell the attendant to phone headquarters that the hold-up car was headed toward such-and-such route out of town. Headquarters was able to call other cars near the route in time to catch the bandits. Then the authorities did some thinking. If information sent from the patrol car to headquarters in this indirect and uncertain way got such good results, how much better results might not be got in other and more difficult cases if the patrol car could send in its information directly and without delay? That is, if the car could call the station as well as the station could call the car? The answer was easy. In this city two-way radio was soon installed.

In cities of all sizes police broadcasting is done from

a single station, and the dispatcher must know instantly, when a crime is reported, which of the patrol cars is nearest the scene and can get there most quickly. In a city with only a few cars it is easy for the dispatcher to have this information, so to speak, on the tip of his tongue.

But in a big city with thousands of streets and hundreds of cars it would be practically impossible for the dispatcher to do this; and so he has a special index, operated mechanically or by hand, which will show him in a second the car number for every street number in the city. Maps with movable discs representing the cars are also used.

Special methods also have been developed for special cases. Thus, whether one or more cars are sent in answer to a complaint depends on the nature of the complaint. A robbery reported while it is going on gets two or three cars. A noisy radio in the apartment upstairs gets only one.

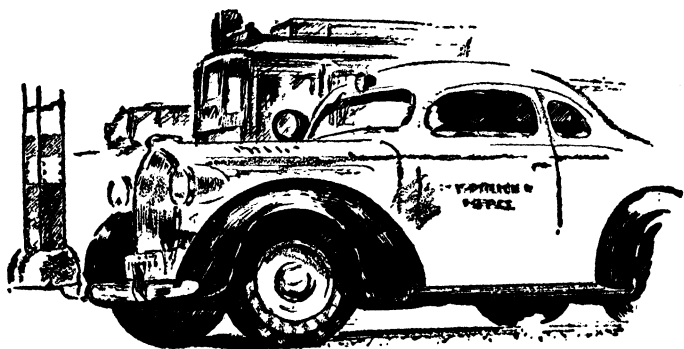
Time has been saved by giving each car its own number. Instead of saying, "Car 5, Precinct 4" it is quicker to say, "Car 54." Messages are now broadcast only once or twice instead of the former three times, because a careful check has shown that no more messages are missed in this way.

In the larger police departments special wiring has been installed in the telephone system so that when a citizen calls up to report a crime or an emergency to the complaint operator the radio dispatcher can listen in. By listening and, if necessary, asking ques-

tions, the dispatcher gets all he needs to know for a broadcast and can send a car on its way before the citizen has finished giving the operator all the details.

Although it is impossible to say exactly how many more criminals have been caught in the act since the police started to use radio, every police department that has adopted a radio system has vastly improved its record of arrests and convictions.

Interesting and important as the records are, they do not give a complete understanding of police work. It is not enough, even, to describe the systems and methods now in use. For the actual job of catching criminals is mostly action, involving living men and women, which can only be shown through stories of actual cases, such as the one which begins the next chapter and the others scattered through the pages that follow.



## CHAPTER II

### CATCHING THEM ON THE RUN

ONE June day in 1938 two kidnapers, Harry Jenks and his brother Walter, shot down Indiana State Trooper Clarence Harmon on the highway near Valparaiso and sped on toward the Illinois line. Both watched the road grimly as the miles roared past. Freedom was not far.

Suddenly Walter Jenks gripped his brother's arm. Ahead was the unmistakable form of a police car. Harry had seen it too. A twist of the wheel, a shriek of skidding tires, and the kidnaper's car was on a side road, racing away from the path of the law. There was another way to Illinois.



The other way was longer, but now that they had dodged the one police car likely to be in that neighborhood they could take a little more time. The road was good, their car fast.

This time Harry Jenks saw it first. Another police car! Where did it come from? No time to wonder now. Harry pushed the brake to the floor, had his car half turned before it stopped. Within seconds the brothers were racing back along the way they had come.

Two police cars! Criminals are superstitious. Things come in threes. Would there be three police cars?

There were three. There were three times three. And more. All night the baffled Jenks brothers drove their car at top speed up and down, back and across the highroads and byroads of Indiana and Illinois; but, wherever they headed, the wall of state police cars, county police cars, sheriffs' deputies' cars, city police cars, appeared before them. There had been nothing in their careful plans to allow for this.

The wall closed in, east, west, north, and south. Twenty-four hours after Trooper Clarence Harmon died Walter Jenks was dead, too, and his brother Harry wounded and captured. The Five State Police Blockade had scored another victory.

Formed at a conference of the state police executives of Indiana, Illinois, Kentucky, Michigan, and Ohio, this blockade is an example of the results that can be obtained through police co-operation and the intelligent use of modern equipment. Such blockades

overcome what is at once a great help to the criminal and a great hindrance to the police—the fact that catching criminals is the responsibility of thousands of separate police departments, each with limited jurisdiction and with limited means for sending to other departments what information it may have about a criminal in flight.

Of course, the police always try to catch their criminal before he is able to get out of the district in which the crime has been committed. When a crime occurs within a city all the city patrol cars get warning over their radios, and each takes a position according to plans that have been made beforehand. This blockade usually results in the criminal's capture within city limits.

But if the criminal gets past the city limits it almost always means that the city police lose jurisdiction and cannot make an arrest. But an arrest by the police in the next town is just as good, and every day more and more cities are making such arrests possible by providing ways of forwarding, without delay, information about fleeing criminals to neighboring police departments.

Sheriffs of the counties in which many of the larger cities are located are installing radio receivers in their cars and by agreement using the sending apparatus of the city police departments. Co-operation of this kind has already brought about capture of many criminals who might otherwise have escaped.

Around the very largest cities, one of the technical

facts of radio has helped the cause of good police work. There are only a limited number of wave lengths that can be used, and in the United States these are assigned to broadcasting stations by the Federal Communications Commission. The Commission gives police radio systems a preference because they are emergency services; and, in order to make the American allotment of wave lengths go around, it encourages police departments in big-city areas all to use the same wave length when possible.

For example, in Bergen County, New Jersey, a thickly settled community across the Hudson from New York City, the county itself has constructed a police radio transmitter which serves all of the seventy communities in the county and a few in neighboring counties. In fact, there is scarcely a large city in the country that does not do police broadcasting for its suburbs—the result being that the area served by the radio station, though split up by political boundaries into several police departments, is really one area as far as the pursuit of criminals is concerned. This aid to law enforcement comes indirectly from the fact that the number of wave lengths that can be used is limited.

Outside the city areas the state police take charge. In over half of the states, state police forces have installed communication systems which are as important as any city or county system. In New York, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, and California, among others, the system used is teletype. Messages written

in the sending station on a machine resembling a typewriter are instantly typed off by electricity on a similar machine in the receiving station.

These states also have teletype machines in the principal city police departments connected with the ones in their state police stations.

In Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Ohio, Massachusetts, and other states, the state police use radio for communication between their posts.

No matter which system is used, the state police usually take the responsibility of co-ordinating all local police stations in the state as well as one or two stations in each neighboring state. In this way the state police know at all times what major crimes have been committed in all parts of the state and so they can act as a clearing house of criminal information. This information is coming into the state police communications center all of the time; there it is sorted out and sent on to the proper places—to a state police car, a city police headquarters, a county sheriff, or over the border into the next state.

Let's look over the shoulder of the Michigan State Police radio dispatcher at East Lansing. In front of him you see six receiving sets. No. 1 picks up all police broadcasts from Lansing, Saginaw, Kalamazoo, Muskegon, and Grand Rapids. No. 2 gets Bay City, Port Huron, Flint, Jackson, and Grosse Pointe. No. 3 brings in five stations of the Ohio State Highway Patrol; No. 4, the five stations of the Indiana State Police; No. 5, the two other stations of the Michigan

State Police; and No. 6 picks up Detroit and Highland Park.

Right off you'll say that it is impossible for any operator to listen to all these stations at once. Well, it is a hard job, but one operator can usually do it. Most of the messages coming through are purely local and of no interest to any other police department. But if two or three important messages start piling in at once, the operator can simply ask two of the stations to wait while he is picking up the third.

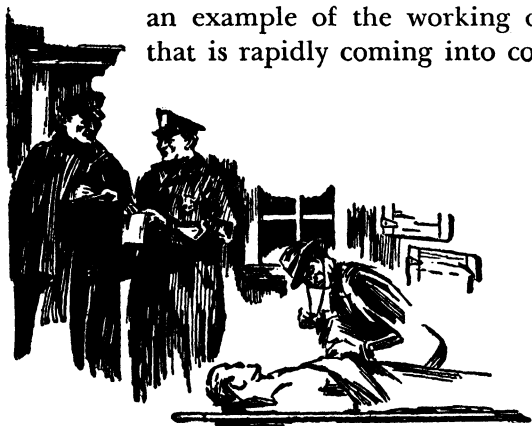
Topping the local, regional, and state communication networks are the interstate communication systems. In the East there is an interstate teletype network hooking up the state police forces of Maine, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Ohio. In the West, California, Washington, Oregon, and Nevada are joined by teletype. Every state police force with a radio system listens to the state radio systems in adjacent states day and night.

The whole purpose of these radio and teletype systems, small and large, is to get information about crime and criminals into the hands of other police agencies with all possible speed. Without such information, individual patrol officers in a given city or individual police departments in a given state often have to work in the dark. But with such information, any police force, and any number of police forces together, become a huge team, with the good results that always come from team play.



Of course, a good deal of the time the patrolmen in Precinct 5 are not affected by what happens in Precinct 19, nor the police force of one city by what happens in another. Much of the crime is local in character, and knowledge of it does not need to go beyond the section where it happens.

But in the case of many important crimes two things must be done. Information about the crime and descriptions of the criminal must be spread over a wide area in all directions from the crime scene, and, if there is enough information to make it possible, united action must be taken to form a blockade. The capture of the murderers of Indiana Trooper Clarence Harmon is an example of the working of a system that is rapidly coming into common use.



## CHAPTER III

### POLICEMAN AND WITNESS TALK TOGETHER

**I**F YOU ever happen to be a witness at the scene of a crime, here's the way it will probably go. When the police arrive they will first separate you and the other witnesses from the merely curious on-lookers who have gathered. As soon as you all have given your names and addresses the officers will ask you one at a time for information which may aid in the immediate pursuit of the criminal. If you can give any such information the officers will flash it back to headquarters at once by radio or telephone and then return to where you are and ask you to wait so that detectives can question you further.

If you happen to be in a hurry, this request may irritate you. After all, you have told the policeman all you saw, so why should you wait around until the detectives get ready to come, and then tell them the same story all over again? Maybe their time is not worth anything, but certainly yours is.

This is why they do it. Those two patrolmen were the first members of the police force to arrive at the scene because it was on their beat. They were close

at hand because it was their duty to patrol that particular section of the city. But because they patrol that section and no other they have not had a chance to get to know—to any extent—criminals in other sections. Detectives, on the other hand, are not limited to any particular section and are familiar with the identity and habits of criminals throughout the city. They are better qualified to question you.

Suppose you had noticed that one of the hold-up men had an old scar. That might not mean a thing to a patrolman, but it might remind a detective of a suspicious character from some other part of the town. Then the detective could ask you further questions, based on his own knowledge of the man, which might bring out other things you had noticed about him but had forgotten.

Before the detectives arrive, the patrolman will ask you not to talk to the other witnesses until all the questioning is over. He will do this because the police know from long experience that the only way to get accurate information is to have each witness tell his story separately.

If that is not done the police may fail for several reasons to get all the facts. For instance, one witness who is more observing than the others may see something which they miss, but which he does not want to have them hear him tell about, for fear word of his special knowledge might get back to the criminal's gang. Such a witness, however, might talk freely if he knew his story was being heard by police ears alone.



Then again, witnesses often withhold information without being aware of it. If Jones tells his story in front of all the other witnesses, Smith and Brown may nod their heads and say, "Yeah, that's just what happened." But if Smith and Brown are questioned separately, each may remember something important that would have slipped his mind if he had listened to Jones and been unconsciously influenced by Jones's idea of what had happened.

Another danger in questioning witnesses together comes when one witness has seen something that does not agree with what another witness says he has seen. When witnesses have different stories to tell, the police want to know about it; but if the first witness has a forceful way about him, and the second has not, the second is likely to keep quiet even though his story may be nearer to the truth.

The Wilton bank robbery was solved because a witness was not afraid to contradict previous testimony. The first witness was a traveling salesman, who stood right across the street at the time of the hold-up. As the bandit car was pulling away he wrote the license number—which he gave as 37945—on the wall of a building. A police check of this license number showed that it had not yet been issued. The police questioned the salesman again. Then appeared the second witness. A ten-year-old girl who heard the police in their second questioning spoke up to say that she knew the last two numbers and that they were 54.

A second check showed that license 37954 had been issued for a secondhand car of a certain make. On the basis of information supplied by the secondhand dealer the men who bought it were traced, identified, and arrested. The case was solved because a child behaved in a way that grown-ups might use as an example, and because the police did not scorn her little scrap of information.

Another thing which may irritate you when you are a witness is the way in which police insist on writing down what you tell them. They are compelled to write it down, and to do it then and there. The longer they wait to question you, the more you will have forgotten; likewise, the longer they wait to write down what you say, the more they themselves will have forgotten. So be patient and remember that, the fuller the information is, the better the chance that the police will have of solving the crime.

The best kind of witness is one who can positively identify the criminal. More often than you would think, the victim of a crime can say definitely who did it. When Chicago Patrolman Charles Walsh was killed by two hold-up men in a delicatessen store on May 16, 1930, the woman who owned the place recognized one of the men as a customer of hers with a name something like "Wojak." She thought he lived somewhere in the neighborhood, so detectives spent the next two weeks going over the voting lists in the Fifteenth Ward for names that sounded like "Wojak." Finally they found a "Wojczek." Going

to the address given, they found nobody there by that name. But they did find a man called Wood, and guessed that that was Wojczek's assumed name. When he was arrested the woman positively identified him as one of the hold-up men, and he was sentenced to ninety-nine years for his part in Walsh's death.

Once you have told your story, the detectives will thank you and ask you to call them up if you happen to think of anything else. A good detective is not discouraged if he fails to get a good clue the first time he questions a witness, for good detective work requires everlasting patience. Do not be annoyed if he comes to see you again and again. He will have thought of new questions to ask, and you will probably have recalled more information. He will most likely have gone through the rogues' gallery for pictures of criminals who more or less fit the description of the suspect in the case, and he may invite you to come to headquarters to look at the ones he has set aside. Or he may ask you to come to the public line-up of criminals who have been caught for other crimes.

Be glad to go. A look at the pictures or the criminals in person may identify the guilty one at once, solve the case, and end your worries. At least you may be able to say: "There, he looked a lot like that fellow, except that he had bushy eyebrows and a crooked nose."

When the witness begins to get as close as this, the detective searches his memory for possible suspects. If he hits on one, then it becomes a business of trac-

ing the suspect's movements and trying to discover some connection between him and the crime.

Whether you are questioned at the scene of a crime or elsewhere, the police will promise to keep your information secret. Sometimes those promises are broken, perhaps through fault of the police, or perhaps because of circumstances beyond their control. Almost always, however, those promises are kept. No one realizes better than the police how important it is to keep faith with witnesses, not alone because the citizen deserves protection from possible revenge on the part of the criminal or his friends, but also because to keep it will broaden and deepen the public's trust in the police.

Because you yourself can never judge how important a piece of information that you have may be, make it a rule to go to the police. No matter how unimportant it may seem to you, your information may be the missing link in a big case. It may help convict a guilty man or it may help protect an innocent one. Justice—not conviction—is the aim of American law enforcement. And if justice is to be done, the police must be able to get hold of all the facts. You can do your share by offering whatever information you may have about any part of a crime which the police are investigating.

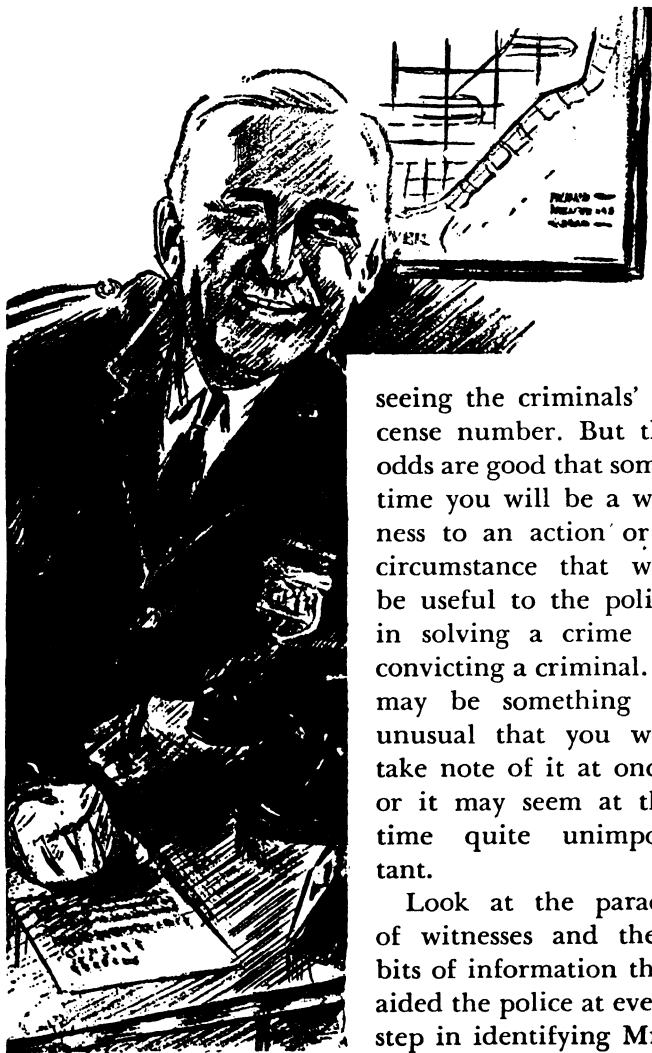
## CHAPTER IV

### THE WITNESS TALKS TO THE POLICEMAN

**E**VEN if you did not actually see the crime happen, you may have some information which will give the police a good lead. Suppose, for example, that you are walking into a grocery store and a man comes rushing out and runs right into you. You are shoved up against the window, your bundles are almost knocked out of your arms, and you turn to give him a piece of your mind. Your words die on your lips as you see him ram a gun into his pocket and jump into a car at the curb.

If you think quickly you will realize that you have seen the last part of a robbery, and you will try to get a look at the license number of the car as it roars away. If you can remember the number correctly, you may be in possession of a most important clue to the criminal's identity. So, although you were not an actual witness to the hold-up, you can furnish information more helpful to the police than the vague description of the bandit that eyewitnesses generally give.

As a matter of fact, the chances are small that you will ever witness a crime or even come as close as



seeing the criminals' license number. But the odds are good that sometime you will be a witness to an action or a circumstance that will be useful to the police in solving a crime or convicting a criminal. It may be something so unusual that you will take note of it at once, or it may seem at the time quite unimportant.

Look at the parade of witnesses and their bits of information that aided the police at every step in identifying Mrs.

Copley and capturing the man who killed her.

Mrs. Copley's frozen body was found on a mountain side near Cheyenne. The first witness was a railroad watchman who had seen a man and woman pass his hut and go on up the mountain even after he had warned them it was not safe. The woman had answered, "I think so too," but the man had taken her arm and urged her onward.

The watchman did not know the woman, and her body when found was partially decomposed and without a sign of identification. The first job of the police was to discover who she was. One of the steps they took was to go over all accounts of missing persons. A worried mother, having received no word from her daughter for weeks, had wired the chief of police in the city where she had last heard from her. It was the city just outside of which the body had been found. The mother said she had a receipt for \$200 which she had wired her daughter.

The police went to the telegraph office. Yes, the money order had been cashed, but the lady had given no address. That was all, except—wait a minute—one of the girls in the telegraph office had seen the same woman in a restaurant with a man. She had noticed the man particularly because he had been quarreling with the woman. He was tall, slim, refined, expensively dressed, light complexion, mustache.

With this description, which a waiter at the restaurant confirmed, the police went to the drugstores of the city to see whether they could trace two bottles,

one containing poison and the other gasoline, which had been discovered near the body. Soon they found salesmen who recognized the bottles and remembered both the man and the woman.

The hotels were then visited by the police, and the next witness who remembered the man and woman was the clerk at the one where they had registered—under names that proved to be false. But a truck driver serving the hotel remembered them, too. He had taken the man's baggage to a train late on the day the watchman had seen the couple go up the mountain. The truck driver remembered the address to which the trunks had been sent.

Through this address the man was identified, and through clues in his hotel room which he had left in such a hurry, he was traced to a city hundreds of miles away. He was found, put on trial, and convicted of murder.

None of these witnesses had actually seen the crime, yet each had a clue or bit of evidence which helped bring about the criminal's conviction.

When you are wondering what your police department does with its time, remember that good police work depends first of all on finding all the witnesses. Whether they are human witnesses or silent witnesses, the information they give is the groundwork on which the police must build the case against the criminal. If you offer promptly any information you may have about a crime, you will make it possible for the police to do a quicker and better job.



One of the most useful pieces of information you can give is the answer to this question: "Why was this crime committed?"

The motive is always important. You may know what the motive is. Maybe someone in your office has lost a great deal of money playing the races. Maybe his rival for a girl's affections has a car, and therefore he must have one. Perhaps you have noticed bad feeling growing between two people, one of whom has now died a violent death. Perhaps a woman you know is seeing a great deal of another man despite her husband's well-known jealous nature. Any information such as this can help the police a great deal in solving a crime.

A strange thing about valuable information is that sometimes people do not know they have it. The police in a Michigan city once had to solve a case of murder by shooting. The bullet, on examination by an expert, was seen to be of a type seldom used and had been fired from an old hunting rifle. The police knew that there were only a few of these old rifles outside of museums, and that the only way of finding these few was to let the world know they were looking for one, even at the risk of warning the criminal.

So the newspapers were asked to publish the facts about the rifle. They did. Nothing happened. Two weeks later a man came into the police station to make a complaint. A boarder at his house had moved out a couple of weeks before. He had paid his bill

all right, but yesterday the boardinghouse keeper had happened to go to his attic and had found his old and highly prized gun gone. A description showed that this was the gun the police were looking for, and they had their suspect in the boarder.

More alertness by a citizen would have helped this case. It was in no way the gun owner's fault that he had not come in earlier with his complaint; but if he had read the newspaper story about the gun the police were looking for he would have discovered and reported his loss at once, and the criminal would have been more quickly caught.

Remember this, if you should feel reluctant to volunteer information: Your usefulness as a witness is by no means confined to helping convict the guilty. You may also be protecting the innocent. This second reason, even more than the first, makes it important for you to come forward with your information without delay. The innocent sometimes need all the protection they can get.

Dukas and Shorter owe their lives to a doctor. They were arrested and charged with the murder of a Salt Lake City policeman named Flinn and an innkeeper named Jones. A month or so before, Flinn had arrested Dukas and Shorter for vagrancy. They were given thirty days, and after their release they made threats against the patrolman which were repeated to him by friends; but he paid no attention to them.

Then one cold winter night when Officer Flinn

stepped into the inn to get warm Jones told him that Dukas and Shorter were hanging about the premises. Flinn went out and looked around, saw no sign of the vagrants, came back inside and started removing his overcoat. At that instant two men dashed through the rear door with guns in their hands and began firing as soon as they saw Flinn's uniform. Both Flinn and Jones were shot. Flinn was able to fire back before the two fled, and thought he wounded one of them.

Flinn and Jones died within a few hours, but not before Dukas and Shorter had been picked up, loudly protesting that they owned no guns and were completely innocent. They were identified by the dying men.

Eight hours later the police received a telephone call from a doctor who had just taken a wounded man to a local hospital. The man had been shot through the back and the bullet was still lodged near a rib. He would not allow it to be removed, or tell how it got there. At once the police went to the house to which the doctor had been first called and there they found the wounded man's partner, who confessed that they were the ones who had shot Flinn and Jones. His story was verified when it was found that the bullet which killed Flinn had been fired from the wounded man's gun. Needless to say, Dukas and Shorter were immediately released.

It is not the point that in this case the police were misled by advance information, or that most states

require doctors to report to the police all gunshot wounds. It might have been an ordinary motorist such as yourself who helped the wounded man to the hospital, and in that case your volunteered information would have saved two innocent men just as surely as did the doctor's.

Getting a statement from the victim may be a heartbreaking business. The Raymond case, as we will call it, reduced an unsentimental police chief to tears and called for heroic courage on the part of two parents. Raymond was a college student who was driving a taxi during the summer in order to earn money for his next year's expenses. One night he picked up, as passenger, a young fellow who almost immediately shoved a gun in his back.

The passenger ordered him to take a zigzag course through town and finally made him stop at the edge of a cemetery. Raymond was told to get out of the cab and lie on the ground, whereupon his fare hit him over the head with the pistol. This cowardly act was too much for Raymond. He jumped up and started to struggle with the gunman, only to get a bullet in his abdomen.

By the time a passing motorist discovered Raymond lying by the roadside and rushed him to the hospital the gunman had fled. The chief of police came to the hospital as soon as he was notified of the case and found Raymond in intense pain, but conscious. Doctors told the chief that an operation would be performed, but that the boy would surely die.

So the chief went to the boy's parents and laid his case before them. Very gently he told the father and mother that the boy had only the slightest chance to recover. He explained that whether he lived or died, the police would not rest until his attacker had been brought to justice. If Raymond lived, the police could, of course, get his story when he recovered and would have his testimony in court when the criminal was caught and brought to trial. But if Raymond died, as it seemed certain he would, then it was extremely important that the police should have taken his testimony in the form of a dying declaration.

A dying declaration is admissible as evidence in court only if the person who makes it knows or believes he is about to die. This meant that Raymond would have to be told that he was about to die or else his story of the shooting could not be used as evidence. Chief Collins had to tell the sorrowing parents this, and had to ask permission to let their son know that he had but a short time to live. Showing real courage, they consented, after a while.

Raymond did die, but not before he had told the chief a clear story of what had happened. Raymond stated that the robber had two guns, one of which he had dropped at the scene of the shooting. Fifty hours of hunting by detectives ended in its discovery. More police work brought out the fact that the gun had been stolen, along with two others, by three young hoodlums who had smashed the windows of a pawnshop. Two of the hoodlums had held

up a country club the next night and had been caught and sent to prison. When the police found that the gun dropped by Raymond's killer was one of those taken from the pawnshop, they went to the prison and questioned the two country-club robbers. Then, following their directions, the police captured their third partner in the pawnshop theft, who proved to be Raymond's killer.

That part of Raymond's dying declaration which told of the gun dropped at the scene of the crime by the killer was the piece of evidence that clinched the killer's conviction.





## CHAPTER V

### CRIMINALS ARE HUMAN TOO

NOW and then the police find that the simplest way of picking out a suspect is to let the suspect pick himself out. The criminal is not particularly willing to do this, but sometimes he cannot help it. For criminals are people—people who live outside the law, but people just the same. They have many of the same likes and dislikes and little weaknesses as the rest of us who live within the law.

What's more, they form habits just as anybody else does. Once a burglar or a robber has succeeded with

a crime, he is likely to think that his success was due to the careful and accurate manner in which he carried out the method he selected. So the next time he tries the same method. If he gets caught he thinks he lost out, not because of the method, but merely because of bad luck. If he does not get caught, and succeeds with the same method three or four times, he is completely convinced that he has found the way to commit the perfect crime.

This tendency to form habits has results which help the police. First of all, it convinces the criminal that he is better at one kind of crime than at any other, and so it makes a specialist out of him.

Criminals like to specialize because the returns get bigger as they become expert. But the criminal cannot become expert at any kind of crime without practicing at it, as a carpenter improves his skill by working wood and a golfer may reach professional form only after playing in many tournaments. The more they practice, the more often they are caught, in spite of the skill they gain; and so the police come to know the professionals in every branch of crime. When a crime is reported that shows any degree of expertness, the police immediately think of those criminals who are known to specialize in that particular branch of lawbreaking. This at once narrows down the field of suspects.

As an example of a branch of theft, take "bag opening"—opening a handbag that is over a woman's arm, removing its contents, and getting away before



she knows anything has happened. This is a real crime specialty, and it is one in which the circumstances or the place in which it happens suggest to the police the sex of the criminal. Men seldom try bag opening in department stores because men's shopping habits are different from women's.

A man buying something usually walks up to a counter, gives his order, pays for his purchase, and departs. A woman, on the other hand, has to do a lot of looking before she buys. So, while a man loitering in a store would cause suspicion, a woman crowding up to a bargain counter with a lot of other women would not. If she is a clever crook she can open a bag under these circumstances and make a clean getaway. She probably has looked the store over beforehand and spotted the store detectives, and she may be carrying a fur piece or a coat over her arm, the better to conceal her operations.

Instead of stores, men bag openers choose street-cars, race tracks, carnivals, and other places where their presence will not arouse any suspicion.

The second result of habit is to help police pick out the guilty specialist from a group of them, for not only does a criminal choose a particular kind of crime to commit, but also he usually chooses his own particular method of committing it. Look at the two different methods used by two burglars caught within a day of each other by a Chicago police captain.

The first burglar stole only in the daytime, not

only because he figured he would not get shot at so often, but also because he found from experience that he was seen less often by his victims. His method was to walk right in the front door of a house just after breakfast time of a weekday morning. He had reasoned, correctly enough, that the men would be at work, the children would be at school, and the women would be in the kitchen washing the breakfast dishes. He would go to the bedrooms in the front of the house, pick up what jewelry and money he found, and walk out again. This clever scheme was quite successful, for a while.

The other burglar worked only at night, because he was less afraid of being shot at than of being seen. He would watch the society pages of the local papers, make a list of the people who had left for their vacations, look up their addresses in the telephone directory, and make the rounds, usually entering the houses through an unlocked window. It was a good system, and he was very successful until the police noticed that burglary after burglary was committed in the same way, studied his methods, and set a trap for him.

The police call criminal habits "M.O."—which stands for *modus operandi*, or method of operation. All criminals do not have a particular M.O. There are enough, however, to justify keeping an M.O. file, particularly in the larger departments.

In the old days M.O. files were kept in the heads of detectives who happened to have good memories.

One trouble with this system was that when the detective died or retired the file went with him. Another trouble, particularly in the large cities, was that any one detective worked on only a small number of cases and so could not build up much of a mental M.O. file. Sometimes a detective had a chance to specialize, but most often he would be assigned to a case without regard to whether or not he had had experience with that kind of crime.

When a detective was assigned to an unfamiliar sort of case he could, if he wished, go about among his brother officers asking what criminal was most likely to have held up the victim on a dark street by asking for a match, or by slipping up behind him, or by hiding his masked face behind a newspaper, or whatever had happened. But the inquiring detective could never be very sure of getting good results in this way.

So an English police official worked out a system by which all criminal methods of operation could be listed and filed for ready reference. This system has since been adopted by police departments all over the world.

Here is the way it works. Whenever a crime is committed an officer writes out a report on it, giving a detailed description of the manner in which the crime was committed. When the report gets to the record bureau, the M.O. information is copied off on cards and filed in a special file. The main classification is by type of crime—burglary, robbery, lar-

ceny, and so on. The first subclassification under each of these headings is the time of day or night when the crime was committed. The file is still further subdivided by method of entry—window, door, roof—for burglaries; by the number of men who took part, for robberies; by whether they were armed or unarmed—and so on for each type of crime.

When a city police department adopts such a system, some time must pass at first while the file is building itself up to a usable size; but very soon the detective who is given a case to solve which shows a distinctive method of operation can get valuable assistance by consulting the M.O. file.



## CHAPTER VI

### CRIMINALS CANNOT AFFORD TO BE HUMAN

**I**F CRIMINAL habits were the only ones the police made use of to help them solve crimes, many criminals who are in prison today would be as free as the rest of us. But many an offender is now behind bars because his personal habits gave him away.

No habit is commoner in the United States than the one which caused William Stow to get caught. Stow was a good-looking, well dressed young man, whose manners and conversation were without fault. From meeting him you would have believed that he

was, as he claimed to be at one time, an accountant from an eastern city spending a week or two in Ogden, Utah, on his vacation.

It so happened that while Stow was in this western city the police there were working on a series of burglaries. The method in each case was similar: The burglar would pick out a rooming house in a good neighborhood, walk in very early in the morning, go directly to a bedroom and wake up his victim. In good English he would announce that he was a burglar, that nobody would get hurt if his orders were followed and no alarm was given, and that he wanted all the money and jewelry in the place. After he had collected his loot he would sometimes sit on the edge of the bed for a few minutes of conversation with his victim.

The more burglaries there were, the more the stories of the victims confused the police. Some said the burglar was twenty years old, some fifty. To a big man he looked about five feet tall, but to a terrified little woman he was at least six feet and a half in height. The only fact about him that all the victims agreed on was that he chewed gum continuously and left a wad of it as his calling card. He became known as the "Chewing Gum Kid."

This was as far as the police had got when one evening Inspector Reid was walking down the main street. The town was full of vacationers and the inspector had his eye out for thieves, who are always about at that season. He was particularly eager to get

the Chewing Gum Kid because, just the night before, the Kid had shot a star high-school half-back who had pursued him after the "Kid" had helped himself to the few valuables the family possessed.

Standing on the drugstore corner, the inspector noticed a young fellow coming toward him who chewed gum as if he had a grudge against it. While the gum chewer went into the drugstore soda fountain the inspector had a chance to think about him. The more he thought the more he was willing to bet he had a lead.

So when the young fellow came out of the drugstore the inspector stopped him and asked a few questions, and when William Stow said he was staying at the Antlers Hotel the inspector, who knew that hotel, was willing to double his bet. And when a minute later he noticed on his suspect's wrist a lady's watch that looked very much like one which had been stolen a few days before, that was enough. Stow went to the station house, where he was quickly identified by his victims as soon as they heard his voice and saw him chew his gum.

There is nothing unusual about a man who chews gum. Many do it, and Stow did not think he would be conspicuous. Nor was he conspicuous—except to the police, who were on the watch for gum chewers. His arrest came because he had drawn special attention to himself by a personal habit.

Another and more dangerous habit led to Grover Vane's downfall—dangerous because it pointed the

police to the exact spot where they could catch Vane in the commission of a crime. Vane fell for pretty girls. On his second successful robbery of the same telegraph office, he had been so attracted by Miss Rose Taylor that he stayed and talked to her for twenty minutes after emptying the cash register. After this romantic happening the police reasoned that sooner or later he would come back a third time, and when he did they were ready for him.

In cases like these the criminal usually has to repeat his crime at least once before the personal habit becomes noticeable enough to be put down as important. When that happens the police give it a classification in their M.O. file and refer to it in the regular process of checking over the file when they are confronted with a new crime.

Aside from personal habits there are others, such as business or professional habits, which betray the criminal. There is probably no better example of this than one of the most famous cases in English police records, which was solved because the criminal betrayed his occupation when he committed the crime. Dr. Ruxton, an English surgeon, killed his wife and, because she was the only witness, her maid. He cut up their bodies and, taking them many miles from his home, dumped the pieces into a river. Not long afterward some of the pieces were found and the police were called.

By dragging the river and hunting along its banks the police recovered the head, arms, hands, thighs,



legs, and feet of two bodies and the severed trunk of one. The two bodies had been so expertly carved up that it was some time before the police could determine their sex and approximate ages. Other circumstances suggested that the two bodies might be those of Mrs. Ruxton and the maid, and suspicion fell at once upon Dr. Ruxton, though at first it seemed impossible that he could have done such a thing.

It grew, however, as soon as the police had a detailed description of the two women. Everywhere that either one of them had differed physically from other people, the corresponding part of one of the recovered bodies had been completely destroyed. Their teeth had been removed, the eyes had been taken out—one of the women had been cross-eyed—and the toes and a bunion had even been cut from one of the feet. The police began a thorough investigation of Dr. Ruxton and soon had the evidence with which to convict him. If the doctor had not done such an expert surgical job he might have gone free.

The kind of evidence which came out in this case—the kind in which some personal trait or peculiarity is shown by the crime itself—is the favorite of many detective story writers. If you like detective stories, you have read more than once of the baffling crimes committed in fiction by left-handed or one-armed criminals. You have read, too, about the firebug, the dope fiend, the murderer who smokes only a very unusual brand of cigarette, and the woman who uses an odd perfume. And you have read about

the crook who cannot resist the temptation to gamble when he has made a haul.

Many of these mystery yarns are based on fact, and so they do not disprove the saying that truth is stranger than fiction. That it is indeed is shown nowhere else more strongly than in police work. One of the strangest bits of truth came out in the case of the shoes with the special arches.

The police entered the case when they were sent to the house of an old lady by a neighbor who thought he had heard her calling for help. The neighbor was not mistaken. Two men had entered the old lady's house about twelve hours earlier in search of a large sum of cash she was supposed to have hidden. Convinced after torturing her for a time that she had no more than the \$300 they found in a book, they shut her in a closet and wedged furniture against the door. There she stayed until the police found her.

The old lady had never seen the men before, but she was able to describe them in detail. Beyond that there was only one clue—a perfect shoe-print in the yard. But its usefulness was quickly destroyed, for just as the police were making a plaster cast of the print a photographer from an unfriendly newspaper snapped a picture which his editor printed on the first page of the next edition. It was found later that the thieves could hardly destroy their shoes swiftly enough after they saw the paper.

Starting with the old lady's description of the men and the M.O. of the crime, the police picked out

three suspects. Since the police could not be sure that the suspects had destroyed the shoes they wore when they entered the old lady's house, they checked the cast of the shoe print with the shoes the men were wearing at the time of their arrest.

One wore a shoe that exactly matched the print.

The police could see that the man was amazed. He had reason to be. The shoes he had worn during the commission of the crime had been destroyed. The pair he had on when he was arrested were borrowed. He told the police that they were. Well, then, why had he had to borrow shoes, and whom had he borrowed them from? Because of his confusion at the way things had worked out it was easy to get his confession, and the whole tangled chain of circumstances was finally straightened out.

There had been a fourth man who was supposed to take part in the robbery. He had looked over the premises the day before the crime. Then he had lost his nerve and refused to go on with it. But he was still on good terms with the gang, and when one of them came to him to borrow a pair of shoes he had told him to go to his room and help himself. The borrower was very much pleased to find a pair with just the sort of arch supports he had always wanted. How could he know that they were the ones which the fourth man had worn when he looked over the premises, and which made the print the police had found? He put them on, and they carried him and his partners straight to jail.



## CHAPTER VII

### HOW CRIMINALS TRAP THEMSELVES

**E**VEN if a criminal does not give away his guilt by a criminal habit or by a personal habit which gets mixed up with his crime, there are other human actions which may hand him over to the police. The actions themselves may be perfectly common and human, but criminals can't afford to act like human beings.

Slim Jim Reilly found that out. Not more than a few months out of jail, Reilly helped plan and carry out an armed robbery at Sangthorp's Café in Salt

Lake City on December 9, 1933. Together with some of his pals, Reilly had watched the café carefully before the hold-up. The gang knew that Sangthorp's always got about ten thousand dollars on Saturday mornings with which to cash pay checks. They held the restaurant up one Saturday morning and got away with eleven thousand.

On the previous afternoon Reilly had arrived in Ogden, a short way from Salt Lake City, with another member of the gang and their girls. They drove downtown, and Reilly went into a drugstore and left a roll of films to be developed. Then they went to the house of a friend to spend the night. The friend lived just outside Ogden, and was well known to the local police.

Later the same afternoon Inspector Reid dropped into the drugstore, where the proprietor said, "I saw a friend of yours this afternoon," and mentioned Reilly's visit and the roll of films he had left. Friends of the force are encouraged to report such things. Neither thought more about the incident until the next day when word came of the robbery at Sangthorp's. •

Reid suspected at once that Reilly might have had something to do with it, so he went back to the drugstore to find out whether the pictures had been called for. No, they hadn't, said the druggist; but they had been developed, if the inspector wanted to take a look at them. He did, and found several photographs of Reilly and his gang.

As the inspector came into police headquarters with the photographs he heard his chief talking over the telephone to the Salt Lake City police, getting the descriptions of the fugitives in the Sangthorp case which had been furnished by witnesses.

One look at what Chief Collins had written down, and Inspector Reid knew that his guess about the snapshots had been right. Several men in the photographs had been described exactly. Then it was an easy matter to guess where Reilly had spent the preceding night. The two girls who were still there gave the police enough information to lead to the gang's arrest in Kansas City.

Reilly, though a fairly clever criminal, had been thinking so hard about the plans for this robbery that he entirely forgot that there must be no connection between his personal life and his criminal life. For a few moments he enjoyed himself as a human being, and by such an innocent pastime as taking pictures brought on his arrest as surely as if he had made a blunder in the crime itself.

Criminals have even been known to forget the old adage, "Don't give your right name." Two Army deserters had been specializing in holding up loan offices. They would walk in together; one would ask for an application blank which he filled out while the other was getting the lay of the land, and if everything looked all right they would announce that it was a hold-up. The system worked nicely until one day the man filling out the blank so far forgot

himself as to put the correct address on the application blank! This carelessness—human but of a kind which no criminal could afford to indulge in—led to arrest of the culprits.

Inexperience is as fatal as absent-mindedness. Two detectives assigned to the pawnshop squad found in a pawnshop a ring that had been stolen in a burglary a few days before. They went to the address given by the pawnbroker and were surprised to find her name on a mailbox in the apartment house lobby. They rang, were admitted, and found two men and two girls, all unarmed, in an apartment that was almost filled with stolen property. The closets, the bureaus and all other available places were stuffed with stolen luggage, clothing, handbags, and jewelry.

The police learned later that the two women knew their husbands were thieves, but had not been instructed to be careful. Running short of cash one day, one of the women pawned the ring, not knowing that almost every city has an ordinance requiring pawnbrokers to give the police daily reports describing all goods pawned or bought. The girl did not even know enough to give a false name and address.

Another human failing is to live up to the limit of your income. For a law-abiding citizen this leads to trouble enough, and for a criminal it leads to jail, as in the case of the post-office clerk who could not resist the temptation to spend the money he had got by dishonest means. This lad was approached by a gang who made a deal with him to place some pads

of money order blanks close enough to the wicket in his cage for them to be reached by a hooked wire when he was absent.

The gang got the blanks all right, and the clerk was not suspected until it was noticed that he had been buying a great many new clothes. Thereupon the post-office detectives questioned him, and after telling a number of tall stories about where all his money was coming from he finally confessed to the crooked deal.

Sooner or later nearly every criminal gives himself away by making any one of a thousand human errors like this. The inexperienced criminal generally does it sooner, and the experienced criminal later. That is, he may be clever enough to avoid making a beginner's mistakes while he is learning his dishonest trade, and so get to the point where he will have learned it so well that making any kind of mistake will seem almost impossible to him. But the time will be sure to come when some slip will put him into the hands of the police, no matter how good he is.

There is a reason for this. A good prize fighter may be knocked out when he has been so worn down that he is too tired to protect himself. So may a clever criminal in his fight with society. Even if his skill remains the same, he may in time become so tired and nervous that he cannot put up a proper defense. Then the law steps in and delivers its knockout blow.

In other words, it is physically impossible for a criminal to maintain the terrifically high state of



nervous tension that is required if he is to go on fighting the law all his life. The nervous system of no man will stand it. Nervous indigestion is an occupational disease of criminals. A great number of them dose themselves continually with medicine for their digestions, and many use narcotics to relieve their nerves.





## CHAPTER VIII

### SILENT WITNESSES

**M**OST major crimes are some form of theft, and theft by its very nature rarely has a human witness. But almost always it has at least one silent witness. When no living person can stand up and point his finger at the thief and call him guilty, very often a thing, an object, a piece of senseless matter, can, as the result of good police work, make the accusation and offer the proof that sends the culprit to jail. Even a potato can do it.

Wherever policemen gather to yarn about their work someone recalls the classic case in which a farmer was suspected of stealing potatoes from his neighbors. The latter were certain that he was guilty; but he was never seen taking anybody's potatoes, and there was apparently no evidence against him.

So the police asked the farmer whether they might take some of the potatoes from his stock to headquarters and examine them. Since all the potatoes grown in that area were the same variety, the farmer did not see how anybody could tell his from his neighbors'—certainly he couldn't. The police couldn't either, but they got one of their laboratory experts to make a chemical analysis of the dirt still clinging to the samples they took from the suspected farmer's supply. The tests showed that the earth on certain of the potatoes contained traces of two separate brands of fertilizer used by two of the complaining farmers, but not used by the suspect. Confronted with these facts, the suspect confessed.

Often the silent witness can make complete and convincing the vague testimony of a living witness, and in the hands of the police be the tool that builds a winning case for the prosecution out of the scraps of surmise offered by some bystander.

About seven o'clock on a December evening the police department of Wichita, Kansas, was notified that an elderly woman had been killed and another seriously injured by a hit-and-run driver. The downtown corner where it happened was littered with the

Christmas packages the victims had been carrying home. The police department's trained scientific investigator was put on the case, and his first move was to make a thorough search of the scene of the crime. Some distance away from the corner he found in the slush a piece of radiator cap ornament a quarter of an inch thick and less than half of an inch long. Aside from a guess by a witness that the car which hit the women was a Chevrolet, this was the only clue.

Taking the piece of ornament to a Chevrolet agency, the investigator learned that it really was part of the radiator ornament put on cars delivered in late 1933 and 1934. Since most Chevrolets made in those months were dark in color, the investigator began a search for a black Chevrolet of this model with a broken radiator ornament.

All members of the police department were given orders to help in the search for such a car, and every garage and parking lot was carefully checked. Within twelve hours two cars with broken ornaments were found, but the piece picked up at the scene of the crime did not fit either one of them. The investigator, however, did not give up. He began searching the streets, and the next day found in front of an apartment house another black 1934 Chevrolet with a broken radiator ornament. The tiny bit of metal which he took from his pocket fitted it exactly.

Further examination of the car at the police garage revealed clue after clue. One headlight lens was cracked, the other was new, and, according to the

owner's admission, had recently been installed in another town. There were indications that dents had been removed from the hood and right front fender not long before. Blood spots were found on the fender, front license plate and radiator cover. A hair was found on the bumper, another in the crack of a door. Careful checking of these finds so clearly established the connection between the car and the accident that the driver confessed.

Sometimes a silent witness is in plain sight but unlikely to be seen except by a very wide-awake policeman. A crippled woman died, and her sister and brother-in-law called the police, saying she had committed suicide. Sure enough, the police found, beside her body on the living-room floor, a note signed with her name, saying that life had become unbearable.

Even this evidence, which seemed complete and final, did not cause the police to go back at once to headquarters and mark the case closed. They stayed awhile, talking to the sister and the brother-in-law, offering sympathy and advice, putting them at their ease. While they stood talking the brother-in-law absent-mindedly took a piece of paper from his pocket. The sharp-eyed officers saw that it was folded in a peculiar manner. Casually one of them reached out and asked to see it. While the trembling brother-in-law looked on, the policemen fitted it to the note found near the dead woman. The creases matched exactly. With this silent but damning witness before him the brother-in-law confessed that the note was a

forgery, and that the dead woman had not committed suicide but had been murdered.

Then there are cases in which the silent witness must be traced through a third person, usually some one who can swear that the article that serves as a clue belonged to or was closely connected with a certain individual. That is the sort of case that developed when blood began to trickle from a trunk in the rooms of the Railway Express Agency in Baltimore, one afternoon in August, 1937. The Express crew hurried to force open the trunk and found in it the body of a young man with a bullet hole in the back of his head.

The police were able to identify the dead young man as a petty racketeer, but that did not tell who had killed him. So they went to work on the trunk. It had been left at the Agency earlier in the day by a man who gave orders for it to be shipped to an address in Atlanta. It was a new, cheap trunk with no marks of identification except the manufacturer's label. There was nothing to do except to make the rounds of all the stores where such a trunk might have been bought, and to try to check up on everybody who had bought one like it. It looked like an impossible task, but the police found what they were after, and a little bit more.

Not only did they find the store where the trunk had been sold that very morning, but the storekeeper told them that in order to make the sale he had been forced to help carry the trunk to the buyer's apart-

ment. He gave them the address and a description of the buyer.

At the apartment house the police found that a man of that description was living there under the name of Thomas Sanger. The police searched his rooms. They found two things. One was Thomas Sanger himself. The other was the Railway Express Agency's receipt for the trunk. There was further evidence as well, but this was enough to make Sanger confess the shooting, cursing the luck that brought the police to his apartment half an hour before he planned to leave Baltimore forever.

But it was not luck—it was good police work. The newness of the trunk indicated to the detectives that it had just been bought. As a matter of fact, since it was a trunk of a common kind with no other marks of identification its shiny appearance was the only unusual thing about it. With this to go on the police looked for a live witness to connect the trunk with its owner—for the salesman who had sold it and might remember the buyer. The only luck was that the live witness could not only connect the silent witness with the guilty man but also point to the place where he lived.

The police neglect no silent witness, no matter how useless it may seem to be. With nothing more than the cover of a book of paper matches they were able to track down two hold-up men who were known as the "Brutes" because they twisted the arms of their women victims and knocked the men's front

teeth out. It is a common joke that books of paper matches are to be found far from the addresses of the people who advertise on their covers; but when the police picked one up near the scene of a "Brute" hold-up they did not laugh and throw it away again. The address on the match book was that of the Wagon Wheel, a restaurant in a distant part of the town, and there the detectives went at once.

Inquiries among the help brought out the information that a man who had once washed dishes there answered to the description of one of the "Brutes," and one of the workers even had an idea about where he might be living. With this lead the detectives soon tracked him down; he and his partner were arrested and identified, and the case of the "Brutes" was solved.

Silent witnesses can even uncover faked crimes. When a salesman who had just sold a car for cash walked into a police station and reported that he had been held up and robbed, no one at first had reason to doubt his story. His clothing and shoes were covered with mud, and he said that he had been shoved into a ditch. But as he went on his story began to ring a little false to the ears of police officers who had been listening to witnesses for many years: his indignation seemed forced, and his answers to questions came too quickly.

So the policemen examined the salesman's muddy coat more closely. The stains were rather unusual: instead of the smear of mud that would have been



there if he had indeed been shoved into the ditch, the coat showed fingermarks, which made it perfectly plain that the mud had been put on by hand. When this was pointed out to the salesman he admitted that his story was false. He had made it up to hide his own theft of the money for the car he had just sold.

In all of these cases the police were fortunate because their silent witnesses were not hard to find. But such witnesses do not often show themselves, and searching for them is a branch of police work by itself.





## CHAPTER IX

### THE SPECIAL INVESTIGATOR

**I**F YOU were looking for bloodstains at the scene of a crime, would you pay attention to anything but dark red spots? If not, you would probably miss more than half the bloodstains there, for a drop of blood on wall paper, for example, usually is changed from its original dark red to some entirely different color—to green or purple or black—by the action of the dye in the paper. You could not be expected to

know many such special facts, and neither could the ordinary patrolman. That is why police procedure at the scene of a crime always goes something like this:

The patrolmen are almost always the first officers to arrive. They question witnesses and get a preliminary story, but their duty at the scene of the crime itself is to guard it, not to search it. That they leave to the special investigator.

The special investigator is an officer trained in the search for clues, or silent witnesses, at the scene of a crime. To his job of searching, he brings not only knowledge of a thousand facts like that one about bloodstains, but also a surprising number of instruments made especially for his work.

His car is equipped with two-way radio in order to report immediately any discovery which may be important enough to call for a blockade. He has several special cameras: one for night work, one for shooting fingerprints, one that will include all four walls of a room in one picture. With the cameras he brings his own lighting equipment.

Then there is a complete kit for taking fingerprints in the ordinary way, and special powder and tape for taking them from glass or woodwork. Besides these he has tweezers for picking up hairs and fibers, tools for cutting off a piece of wood, metal, or glass on which there may be a suspicious mark, material for making plaster casts of footprints or tire impressions, a machine for testing brakes in automobile accident cases, and so on.

The special investigator usually begins by photographing the entire scene. He takes a picture that will cover as much ground about the dead body or the blasted safe as can be clearly shown in one shot. He places a plainly marked measuring instrument on the scene so that it will appear in the picture. This is to prevent arguments later about distances between objects as they were when the crime occurred. Besides, a picture like this, with a measure included, will give the jury a much more accurate idea of what the scene was like than any number of word-of-mouth descriptions by the best of witnesses.

What the special investigator does next depends upon the kind of crime he has to deal with. If it is murder, he takes a close-up photograph of the body in exactly the position in which it was found. Then he examines it very carefully for signs of every kind—marks which might indicate cause of death, marks which were made before or after death, bloodstains, fragments of hair or cloth in the victim's hands, fragments of skin or other scrapings from his fingernails, spots of all kinds on his clothing, dust from the cuffs of his trousers, and dirt from his shoes.

Then the investigator examines the rest of the scene. He looks carefully around and under the body and about the room. He examines all the doors and windows to see how the murderer got in and got out. He looks into every closet that may have made a good hiding place. He inspects the yard outside for cigarette stubs or anything else the murderer may have

dropped or thrown away, and for any mark he may have made. He makes a note of the general appearance of the house as a whole, as he has done of the rooms inside, and he may go along the road or street for a distance in both directions in his search for clues.

For the hunt has to be thorough. In one of Canada's most famous murder cases, the first search of the scene produced nothing of real value. So the police went back to the swamp where the body was found, prepared to go over it inch by inch. After hours of work a cigarette holder was picked up; the initials on it were those of the victim—and those of the suspect, too! The suspect swore that the holder was not his, that it must have belonged to the dead man. But witnesses were found who swore that the dead man had never smoked, and that the suspect had been seen using that very holder.

Sometimes the police get unexpected help in their search of a crime scene. On a May midnight in 1937 firemen were called to a house in Warren County, New York, and found the roof and entire second story ablaze. As soon as they were able to get the fire under control they discovered the bodies of old Mr. and Mrs. Kugel, who lived in the house, burned almost beyond recognition. This might easily have been put down as an accidental death from fire, because it was known that old Kugel had been in the habit of smoking cigarettes in bed. But the sheriff and the district attorney wanted to be sure, so they called in

special investigators from the New York State police.

These investigators discovered spots on the linoleum on which the bodies had been found, but the linoleum was so charred that they could not be identified in the laboratory as human blood. A short time after, one of the Kugels' neighbors was walking along a brook near the house when his dog nosed out a piece of an iron gear wheel at the edge of the water. The neighbor saw at once that the piece of gear, which was of a size and shape to make a handy weapon, had on it spots that looked like blood, and he called the police.

The investigators had an analysis made and found that the spots were human blood. They also found something else. The blood of every person belongs in one of four groups which laboratory tests can identify, and tests in this case identified the blood on the gear as belonging to the same group as that in the charred bodies of the unfortunate old folks. After this there could be only one conclusion. The fire was not an accident, but an attempt to cover up the fact that Mr. and Mrs. Kugel had been murdered.

The most important clue to the murder was the piece of iron gear. The police went to work to find the person most likely to have had such a weapon. There were several suspects. One of them, Charles Robert Smith, the handy man for a local junk dealer, had been missing for a number of days. He was traced to a near-by county and arrested, and a short while afterward he confessed. He had heard, he said,

that the Kugels kept a large sum of money concealed in their mattress, and he had killed them to get it. The "large sum" turned out to be less than one hundred dollars, but it was enough to buy Smith a one-way ticket to the electric chair.

As the police discover each piece of evidence it is placed in its own special kind of container for safe keeping. Clothing, knives, guns, and similar articles are fastened to boards. A shell, bottle, flashlight, or other cylindrical object with a fingerprint or telltale stain is put inside a simple wooden crate. A piece of glass, wood, or metal bearing evidence is suspended in a wooden or cardboard box so that the telltale print touches no surface. Documents are kept absolutely flat and placed between two pieces of cellophane or clean paper. Every other kind of evidence has its own container.

As it is placed in its container, each object is marked. The container itself is labeled with the number the police have given to the case, and with the exact location where the object was found. If the object is a common one—a tire, a flashlight, a knife, a cartridge—it is marked with the investigator's initials or some other special mark before it goes into its container. This care is taken in order that the investigator may positively identify it in court if he is asked to pick it out of a group of similar objects.

Probably the most interesting part of the examination of a crime scene is the search for traces. It is interesting because about the only thing the investi-

gator knows in advance is—where to look. He does not know what to look for at any particular scene. But he does know some kinds of traces he may find. Hair, tobacco, ashes, threads, dust, earth, powder, fuzz from rugs, bits of glass, metal filings, are all likely to turn up. Every one of these things has helped to solve more than one case in police history.

So, prepared to find almost anything, the investigator turns his attention to the places where he knows the tiny silent witnesses are likely to be. These places are usually surfaces—surfaces of chair seats, arms, and backs; of table tops and legs, particularly if they are made of rough wood; of window panes, rugs, mirrors, walls, and woodwork; of handles and drawers, inside and out.

Nor does the interesting part of the work stop when the traces are found. Laboratory tests of them must be made and may cause them to point to one person as the criminal. Whether this happens or not, the real excitement begins when the suspect of whom the police are fairly sure is captured, for then comes the work of matching traces.

For every trace left by the criminal there may be a corresponding one which he unknowingly took away with him. Thus, when he made a footprint he took some dirt away with him on his shoe. When he left a thread on the window sill he took a wood splinter. When his coat rubbed the plastered wall, it picked up particles of the whitewash.



The sooner a criminal is caught after the crime, the better are the chances of finding on him traces exchanged for traces left behind. One set of traces is often all that is necessary, but when the police have both sets they have double-checked their evidence.



## CHAPTER X

### HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF AGAINST THEFT



WHEN the search for traces has been completed, the next important step in cases of larceny is to make an inventory of stolen property. This inventory is always made. It may point to a suspect immediately, as in cases where the M.O.—such as the theft of nothing but jewels—suggests the work of a criminal known to the police. And it may help to identify him later when he is caught. In any case, it makes certain that all stolen property that

comes to the police is registered and helps greatly in restoring it to its owners.

If you have ever complained that the police took too much of your time in investigating a theft at your house, and then never did recover and return your

missing valuables, stop for a moment and consider what they were up against.

First, let us suppose that the police have got hold of your stolen property. Before handing it over to you they want to see what help they can get from it in their search for the men who stole it. Most of the time, unfortunately, that help is not much.

There are two reasons for this, and the first is modern mass production. So many of the things we wear and otherwise use in our daily lives are made by machines which turn them out in great quantities and from the same pattern or patterns. One size-seven hat of a given make is exactly like another of the same size and make. The same is true of shoes, coats, dresses, fountain pens, watches, and other things that are frequently stolen.

The second reason is that even when there are differences between two apparently identical machine-made articles—differences which appear under the microscope and are the basis for much of the scientific identification that is being done these days by the police—these differences are not known and recorded by the owners of the property. Most people have neither the time nor the knowledge to examine their belongings in detail.

This is by no means true of all property. Watches and cars have numbers by which they can be identified, precious stones conform to certain standard descriptions, and some articles of clothing have indelible marks. But most property is not marked in

any practical way, and this is a great hindrance to the police in getting it back to the owner when it is stolen, and in proving their case against the man who stole it.

Let us follow two detectives who have traced a burglar to his apartment. He has been arrested and sent off to jail, and the detectives are now faced with the problem of returning to the rightful owners all of the stolen property which they have found in the apartment.

They take everything down to police headquarters and try to identify it piece by piece by referring to the lost and stolen property file. Then they notify the owners of such property as they have identified in this way to come and claim it.

The next step is to confront the prisoner with the remainder of the property.

"Where," ask the detectives, "did you get all this stuff?"

"Well," says the prisoner, "I got that silver fox at 55 Maury Street, the camel's-hair coat at 20 Woodside Court, the silver coffee pot from 1404 Van Buren Street. The frat pin and wrist watch I got out of the same jewel box, but I can't remember where. The rest of the stuff I can't remember about at all."

The detectives copy down all these addresses, interview the people who live there, and ask those who have had property stolen to come and identify it. Even then they may be able to return only a part of the stuff they have found, both because owners are

not always able to identify their property beyond doubt and because burglars often forget many of the places they have stolen from.

Then the detectives run through the M.O. file and notify all people who have reported burglaries with the same M.O. that this burglar used, or who live in neighborhoods where this burglar has worked. In this way more of the stolen property will be returned; but the detectives are likely to have a good quarter of the loot left on their hands after all of the probable owners have come and gone.

Some of it may be worth little, some worth a great deal. None of it has been described accurately enough by owners reporting a theft to make it possible for the detectives to identify and return it. So it goes the way of all such property. It is held for a certain period by the police and then sold at public auction.

It has been suggested that manufacturers should be required to put a distinguishing mark on every article produced for sale with a value of more than, say, five dollars. Offhand, this may sound like a good idea; but it is full of practical difficulties. Would the American people keep a record of the identifying marks on all the property they purchase? If past experience is any indication, they would do no such thing.

Try it out on yourself. Do you have a record anywhere of the movement and case numbers of your watch, or of the engine and serial numbers of your car? Have you ever written down an accurate descrip-

tion of any jewelry you own, or made a record of the special marks on any other property that might be stolen? If your answer to these questions is yes, you are an exceptional citizen.

You will say that some of this information can be obtained elsewhere, and you will be right. You can get the motor and serial numbers of your car from the state licensing agency, and your watch number from the jeweler or the factory. But getting the information in this way takes time. In case of theft, it would delay the police and so perhaps give the thief as much start as he would need for a clean getaway.

The idea behind this suggestion that all articles be marked is that the police could keep a file of all lost and stolen property, even as they now keep one of lost or stolen cars, watches, and other property that bears identifying numbers or marks. But the cost of such a complete file would be so great that no police department could afford it.

The real way to solve the problem of stolen property is not by training the police to get descriptions, or getting factories to put special marks of identification on everything they make, or in spending thousands or perhaps millions of dollars to build up local, state, and national files of stolen property. The real solution is to prevent theft of the property in the first place. Prevention is the chief purpose of the warnings to householders which are continually being issued by police departments, particularly in vacation seasons.

Here are typical lists of precautions. The first you can put into practice any time you leave your house for the day or the evening:

Leave a light burning in the house and turn off your porch light.

Don't pull down your window shades.

Don't leave notes indicating the time you will return.

Don't leave your key under the mat, over the door, or in the mailbox.

Be sure that all doors and windows are securely locked. Get in the habit of double-locking the doors.

Close the garage doors: open garage doors reveal your absence.

Tell your neighbor how long you will be gone; ask him to keep an eye on your house but not to divulge the information to anyone else.

And when you leave for your annual vacation:

Don't have the newspapers publish the fact that you are leaving.

Stop the delivery of milk and newspapers.

Tell the mailman to hold or forward your mail.

Arrange with a neighbor to remove advertising matter and other articles that may be left on your porches. Such articles only advertise an unoccupied house and invite burglars.

Notify the police when you are leaving and the approximate date of your return so that a special watch may be made of the premises.

Leave the key with some responsible person so that in case of an emergency an entry can be made without damaging your property. Tell the police the name, address, and telephone number of this person.

Tell the police where you can be reached in an emergency.

Remove all money, valuable jewelry, silver, and other articles that can be taken easily by a burglar. Don't hide money or other valuables under rugs, behind pictures, in the crockery, or in mattresses, as these are the first places where a thief will look. Instead remove them from the house and put them in a safe place.

Inspect all doors and windows before leaving, to make certain they are securely locked and fastened.

Similar "don'ts" have been worked out for business houses. Last year Cincinnati patrolmen distributed to all business men in the city a little slip of paper which was headed "Reminders for the Boss" in big black letters and which read like this:

Investigate thoroughly the character of all persons you hire for all duties which involve the handling of your cash and other valuables.

Check up periodically the associations your trusted employees are maintaining, to avoid the forming of any questionable connections.

Use some intelligent, wide-awake, active person as a messenger between your office and the bank.

Instruct your bank messenger to make his trips at *irregular* times, and to vary his mode of travel, using different routes to avoid easy "spotting" by crooks.

Warn your messenger to be on the lookout for suspicious persons who may watch his movements or attempt to follow him on the street.

Make certain that your messenger and other employees avoid unofficial discussions about the make-up of your pay roll and other details pertaining to the handling of cash within your establishment.



Have your pay roll made up inside a locked room, and provide proper means of protecting your entire premises whenever there is an unusual amount of cash on hand.

Investigate any unusual interest shown by your employees in the handling of cash or other valuables. Remember that many robberies are "tipped off" from the inside, and that often the "inside man" is a trusted employee.

Report any unusual incidents or questionable actions to the police at once. This is the most effective kind of crime prevention, and it cannot be stressed too much throughout your entire organization.

Make it somebody's regular duty to carefully inspect your entire premises at closing time, to be sure that all windows, doors, coal chutes, transoms, skylights, fire-doors and other possible entrances are securely locked.

Provide watchmen, burglar alarms, or other means of protection consistent with the risks existing in your establishment when it is not open for business.

While on the subject of don'ts, another should be added. Don't forget to notify the police that you are home from your vacation, or you may have the same experience as the man in San Francisco who, according to the *Chronicle*, forgot his key. He thought he could get in through a rear window without waking his wife. But a neighbor saw him and telephoned the police. A radio car arrived just as the man got a box under his kitchen window and was throwing a leg over the sill.

"All right, buddy!" said a voice. "Come down with your hands up."

Under a police light he identified himself and ex-

plained. The noise woke his wife, who completed the identification. It also woke the baby, who started to cry. The dog next door began to bark. Presently the whole neighborhood got up, put on bathrobes and came down to join the party. The police were finally satisfied, and the man was allowed to enter his home. His wife put the finishing touch on the affair with one of those wifely comments.

"The next time you try to come home quietly," she said, "bring a brass band and a couple of sky-rockets with you!"

Other precautions against burglary are being adopted by the police. Winnetka, Illinois, has passed an ordinance setting up a service in the police department which should greatly reduce the number of burglaries and robberies in that city. Every person who sells or solicits from house to house must register and have his fingerprints taken. Daylight burglaries in the residential sections, some of which were committed by canvassers or solicitors, led the city to require this.

This sort of crime might occur anywhere. Large concerns sometimes put twenty-five or more persons in one neighborhood in a day, canvass it thoroughly, and move on to another locality the next day. Men hired for this kind of work are not always carefully chosen, and some of them may have criminal tendencies. This was proved in Winnetka in the first six weeks that the ordinance was in effect, when the police discovered, and refused permits to, ten applicants

who had criminal records, and arrested four others who were wanted in other states on charges ranging from child desertion to forgery.

One form of crime which is only too common is thefts of birds, dogs, cats, and other pets. The thieves try to dispose of them to pet shops, and the S.P.C.A. has suggested an ordinance requiring pet-shop owners to keep a record of every animal handled and a description of the person from whom it was bought. This not only would result in the detection of many thieves but also would discourage pet theft by making it dangerous and unprofitable.

A new service of a middle western police department, which is being tried as an experiment, provides free burglary inspections for all business men. The department has on its staff an expert carpenter and locksmith, and will send him without obligation to inspect any business premises. He makes a complete examination of all locks and fastenings and checks every possible way by which burglars might enter. He then writes a report on his findings for his chief, who passes it on to the owner so that he can make any changes necessary for complete protection of his property.

Among the precautions against theft listed in this chapter there are some which you will find useful in safeguarding your home or your place of business. By taking these precautions you will not only protect yourself but also take an important part in solving the nation's crime problem.



## CHAPTER XI

### THRILLS OF POLICE ROUTINE

**I**F YOU have ever come across a five-dollar bill hidden away in a pocket of an old suit you have had the same kind of thrill that a policeman gets when he turns up a wanted criminal in the course of some routine police work. Such cases relieve the deadly monotony of much that the police have to do.

Consider the capture of the Downey gang in Wisconsin in 1933. Driving to the town of Juneau from Forest Lake, David Mills came upon a car that had knocked over a telephone pole. Five men were in-

specting the damage to their car, which was slight. When they saw Mills they climbed into their car and went on toward Juneau, three miles distant and the county seat. Mills knew that people who damaged property in this way are required to pay for it, so he stopped at the next roadhouse and telephoned the facts to the Juneau police.

The call was taken by Larry Cope, one of Juneau's three policemen and its present chief. Though off duty, in civilian clothes and unarmed, Ward got a local citizen to take him to the point where the road entered Juneau, and waited. The car came along in a few minutes and Cope stopped it. After making sure that this was the one that had knocked over the pole, and explaining that the riders would have to pay for the damage, he stepped on the running board and asked them to drive him to the local telephone exchange so that the claim could be settled at once.

The five men, who said they were on a fishing trip, made no objection. When the telephone manager could not be found at his office, Cope ordered the car to be driven around to the county jail, which also served as city police headquarters.

At the jail, Cope asked the driver to follow him inside while he tried to locate the telephone manager. The driver and another man went in with him. In the office, Cope got Sheriff Power to help him to try to find the manager by phone, and while the sheriff was busy with a call he slipped out into the yard for a further look at the car. It was the regular thing to in-

spect any car in a case like this, no matter whom it apparently belonged to.

When Cope got to the car he found three very suspicious things: the three other men had gone; there was no fishing tackle in sight, though they said they had been on a fishing trip; and on the floor of the car there were two loaded revolvers.

At once he reported these facts to the sheriff and the two men in the office were arrested and searched. The search produced \$1,225 from one man and \$660 from the other—rather large sums for fishermen to be carrying about. And there was no identification of any kind on either man. The two were put in a cell while the policemen telephoned Milwaukee to check their descriptions.

Milwaukee reported that their descriptions were those of Stephen Downey and Marty Koenig, wanted for kidnaping. Further search of the car revealed a machine gun in a golf bag, and sash cord, gags, and other weapons under the back seat.

While this was going on a telephone call came from Beaverdam, eleven miles away, and a voice asked what had been done with the men who hit the telegraph pole. Holding the call, the sheriff got a Beaverdam officer on another wire, told him to find where the call was coming from and to arrest the man making it. The man was caught and proved to be one of the three who had run away. He had picked up a ride to the next town.

Returning from Beaverdam with this man, Larry

Cope found a fourth member of the gang hiding in the grass along the highway.

This is the way the Downey gang, wanted for several kidnappings, was caught. Routine police work did it, the same sort of routine followed by police all over the country.

In another city, a police lieutenant was working on a murder case with little success when he saw a taxi pull up to the curb as he drove down a side street. The driver jumped out and ran into a house, leaving the motor running. Because there was a great deal of taxi stealing going on at that time, and an empty car left with its motor running is particularly easy to steal, the lieutenant waited for the driver to come out of the house again so that he might warn him. The first thing he did when the man appeared was entirely routine—one of those things any police officer would do almost without having to think about it. He put his hand over the identification card in the car and asked the driver his name.

The driver began to bluster, saying he did not have to give his name; but the lieutenant insisted that it was information any police officer was entitled to. Finally, the driver gave a name entirely different from the one on the card. So the lieutenant asked some more questions. He soon found he had better than a stolen cab—what he really had was the murder suspect he was looking for.

To call this sort of thing an accident or just plain luck is to wander far from the facts. On the contrary,

these two cases are merely examples of good routine police work. They required only two standard police talents—observation, and the exercise of the old rule:

“Be suspicious without being discourteous.”

One other thing the old rules required was knowledge of what to look for. Some of this knowledge is taught police recruits during their course of training. Much of it is picked up by actual experience, by discussion with other officers, and by supplementary instruction. But it is not enough simply to have this knowledge; a good police officer must apply it instinctively.

Some officers have a special ability which is partly born in them, partly acquired: the knack of seeing signs that would be missed by the average person. A few men in the larger cities who have specialized in tracing stolen cars are remarkably quick of eye and mind. You can walk down the street with one of them and suddenly hear him say, “That looks like a hot car!” Sometimes he will be wrong; but the check-up will usually show that he is right, that the car is indeed “hot,” stolen, or suspicious in some way.

There are many detectives on general work who can do the same thing. They are as good at picking out “hot” people as their brother officers are at picking out “hot” cars. Watch these two detectives riding down the street. Suddenly in a quiet voice one of them says:

“Let’s take a look at those two lads.”

They stop their car, get out and ask the boys who



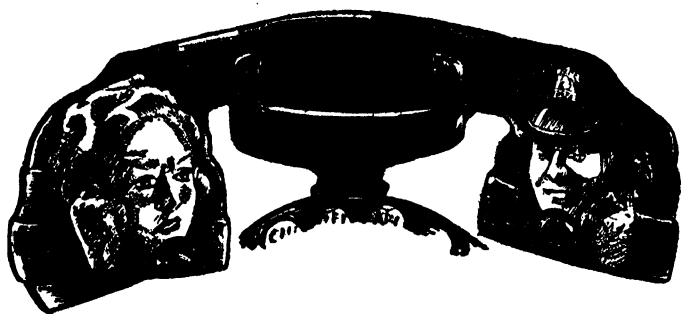
they are and where they are going, noticing that one of them has a bad cut on his head. The detectives get vague answers to their questions, but do nothing more than make offer to bandage the one boy's hand, which is reluctantly accepted.

Back at the station house the hand is taken care of, while the detectives and the boys become more friendly by the minute. Guessing that they are hungry, the detectives send out for sandwiches.

It is hard to hold out against kind treatment like this, and the boys soon admit that they escaped the day before from reform school, caught a ride into town on a freight train, and have not eaten for twenty-four hours.

Ask the detectives why they questioned the boys in the first place, and all you will get will be the simple statement that "the kids looked wrong." To them what they did was the most natural thing in the world.

But it was really another effect of police system—the system that puts men where their particular talents will be developed by constant practice until they are able, as in these cases, to pick up wanted criminals or stolen property by merely performing routine work.



## CHAPTER XII

"I KNOW SOMETHING ABOUT THIS CASE"

**Y**OUR daily newspaper and your police department have one important thing in common—each has the organization and the men for getting the information it depends on for its success. The newspaper has reporters, correspondents, and services like the Associated Press. The police department has patrolmen, detectives, and special investigators, who bring in information in the ways we have already described.

But news often comes to your paper from other sources as well. Much of it is passed on to reporters or editors by persons who have no connection with the paper at all. Many a human interest story that you have read got into print because some citizen

with a news sense took it upon himself to telephone the city editor.

Your police department is helped even more than your paper by citizens who offer information. Its work would be much harder without this help. For this reason, and also because the information it wants and gets must be of the kind that people are tempted to keep quiet about, your police department tries to make it as easy as possible for anybody to pass on to it what he knows.

Sometimes the motive for telling the police is so strong that no encouragement is needed. The motive may be the desire of one gang to reduce competition by turning in a rival gang; or it may be the fury of a woman scorned. In the Thomas case, the wife whom Thomas had cast aside called up the police and told them that her former mate was the guilty man in two unsolved robberies of the week before. Thomas had a criminal record; so the detectives got his photograph from the file and took it to show to the people who had been robbed. The victims of one robbery were just as sure that he was the man as the victims of the other were sure he was not.

The detectives then got another photograph, a more recent one which showed Thomas with some friends, and brought it to the people who had not identified him. They still refused to recognize him, but picked out the other two men as having taken part in the robbery. We will call them Barton and Jackson.

The cast-off lady's telephone call had given Thomas's address, but when the detectives went there they could not find him. They did find Barton and Jackson, however, at an address which they already had, and the two were arrested at once. Then came a little clever detective work.

"We may as well pick up Thomas on the way to headquarters," said one of the officers as the party drove off in the general direction of the hotel where Thomas was supposed to live. "By the way, which door of the hotel does he generally use?"

"That Lincoln Avenue door there," said Barton, and pointed to the side entrance of a hotel they were just then passing. By the aid of this unthinking giveaway which the detective's clever question brought out, Thomas was arrested and added to the party within a very few minutes.

Over half of the information that is offered to the police comes in letters or telephone calls from people who do not give their names. Experienced policemen can usually guess correctly whether such a letter or telephone call is genuine or fake; but they do not depend on guessing. Every piece of information is followed up, no matter how useful or worthless it may seem to be. Results often come about at the most unlikely times and places.

Two detectives once watched a house for weeks in the coldest weather on a tip that criminals had been using it as their headquarters. Just as the officers were about to decide that the tip was a false one, they saw,

walking up the front steps of the house, two murder suspects whom the whole department had been looking for.

Much information comes from stool pigeons (professional informers). These are often ex-convicts or minor criminals who get to know the movements and habits of other criminals among whom they live and work. Since this association puts them under suspicion by the police, they reveal their information in order to prove—or at least make it appear—that they are on the side of the law. Some do it also because they like the feeling of power it gives them to be able to reveal important information. Still others do it because they become frightened when they see their associates getting into something that is too dangerous; they prefer the risk of telling the police about it to that of going to jail or to the electric chair with the rest of the gang. For any of these reasons the police are able to get much information from people of this kind.

Much information also comes from law-abiding bartenders or pool-hall operators who do not want their places of business to become hangouts for criminals. The first that St. Louis police knew of Little Bill was when a pool-hall owner told detectives that he knew a man who knew a second man who knew a third man who was wanted for murder in a city a thousand miles away.

The second man—"Frank" was all that the pool-hall owner had ever heard him called—was planning

to blackmail the third man. The pool-hall owner was not even sure which of his patrons was Frank. He had merely heard the first man talking about him.

So the detectives went to the poolroom. After they arrived, a patrolman on the outside made a telephone call to the place and asked for Frank, and the detectives noted which man was called to the phone. He was followed to his rooms when he left the pool hall, and arrested as material witness to the murder in the distant town. He admitted his blackmail scheme and told the detectives where to find the murderer, who was caught soon after and confessed to the killing.

In extremely difficult cases a cash reward is sometimes offered for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the guilty person. A reward often gets results because it is the kind of prize that most people secretly hope to win some day. The thought of it makes hundreds, or even thousands, watchful, and their alertness may bring about an arrest.

Sometimes it works the other way around: Instead of being detected because of the unusual watchfulness of another person, the criminal will call attention to himself so strongly that the other person is practically compelled to inform the police.

A maid in a Y.M.C.A. first noticed a man because he stayed in his room all day and played his guitar so badly off key that it annoyed her terribly. After he was brought to her attention in this way she could not help recollecting bits of gossip she had heard

about him from time to time from other employees. He had left bills of large denomination with the clerk for safe keeping. He had bought a secondhand car although he already owned a newer and better one. All these items put together seemed pretty suspicious, and she decided to tell the police about it. They went to work and found, after much investigation, that her guitar player had been the head man in a big fur robbery.

But ordinary curiosity is what brings in most of the information from the public. The average person likes to know what his neighbors are doing and why they do it. He likes to compare his work and way of living with theirs. And as he is essentially law-abiding he is not likely to overlook actions that are not quite right.

If Joe Russo ever knew this he had forgotten about it, and his failure to fall in with the ways of the community was his most serious mistake. His neighbors noticed how he broke every rule of farming. He did not plow, plant or harvest at the right time or in the right way, and he did not take proper care of his livestock. Yet regularly he would send a big truckload of hogs or cattle to the market in Minneapolis. The neighbors talked and talked about this, until the time came for Joe to have them over to his place to help him with his threshing.

It is the custom of farmers in many parts of our country to call in their friends to help with the harvest, and when they do, it is the custom of their

womenfolk to see who can set the best table for the harvesters. Wives and daughters work harder than the men in their effort to prepare more and better food than the women on the next farm set out when it was their turn. It is a foremost matter of pride.

Well, Joe gave his neighbors spaghetti. Just spaghetti.

This was not enough and also too much. The very next day the sheriff heard about Joe's unusual behavior, and he gave him and his farm a careful investigation, finding plenty of evidence to prove that the farm was the headquarters of a big gang of stock rustlers.

In order to keep up and increase the steady flow of information from all sources, the police have adopted three standard policies. The first is secrecy. Nothing stops the flow of information so quickly as the news that criminals have hit back at some one who gave information to the police. Absolute secrecy about the source of any information makes this retaliation by the criminals impossible.

The second policy is respect for the position of the informant, particularly if he does not give his name. Persons who prefer to remain anonymous usually have good reasons for doing so. So the police keep faith by never asking an anonymous informant to reveal his identity and by never making any attempt to discover it.

The third policy is to accept every piece of information at its face value. The police do this not only



because to reject information might discourage the informant from ever offering any again, but also because they have seen many a tip that seemed utterly useless when they got it turn out to be one that solved an important case.

The most promising tips are followed up first, of course, but if they fail none of the others is considered too small or unlikely to be given a complete chance to prove its value. Every possibility is thoroughly investigated.





## CHAPTER XIII

### HOW SUSPECTS ARE IDENTIFIED

SO FAR we have looked into the ways by which police single out suspects and gather evidence. In the next three chapters we shall see how they identify their suspects as the wanted criminals—sometimes so completely that the suspects are forced to admit at once that the police are right.

If the police have a witness to the crime, or to the movements of the suspect before or afterwards, the first thing they do is to show the suspect to him. If

possible, they put the suspect in a group of other prisoners or persons who look somewhat like him, and let the witness try to pick him out. They do this as the best way of guarding against a false or mistaken identification. Experience has taught them that witnesses, being human, often make serious mistakes about identity.

A famous criminologist once demonstrated this by asking 369 school children to describe a picture of a boy he had shown them. It was a picture of a boy with brown hair, brown coat and brown shoes, and blue pants. Fifteen boys named the color of the pants correctly, but twenty thought they were brown; five, yellow, and four, gray. Of the girls, twenty-one thought the brown coat was blue; twelve, green; nineteen, gray, and nine, red. And so on. Probably some of the children were color-blind, but then so are some witnesses.

Children were used for this test, and it was only an experiment. But the same sort of mistakes have been made in courtrooms when a man's life or liberty was at stake.

Edwin M. Borchard has collected actual cases of the conviction of innocent persons. Among the most amazing was that of a Boston department store employee who was identified by no fewer than seventeen witnesses, in spite of the fact that later he was shown to be quite different in appearance from the actual criminal.

Such witnesses as these seventeen are generally

people who have made an honest error. Much harder for the police to deal with are the perjurers, who swear to an identification they know to be false. In a few unfortunate cases, such lies injure innocent persons and gain an advantage for the criminal.

Perjury would have won in the Dee case, except for a lucky accident. A young girl employed as a maid for an old lady was sent to the post office to get a money order. Soon after she started out there was a brief but violent storm, and almost immediately she returned and told her mistress that she had been held up and robbed.

To the police she gave a detailed account of the affair, including a complete description of the man who had held her up. A hitchhiker answering this description was found later in the next town, and in his possession was a five-dollar bill, exactly what had been stolen from the girl.

The man was, of course, arrested and would probably have been convicted at the next term of court if it had not been for an alert bartender who, on the following Saturday night, heard some men talking about the robbery. Two of these men were being told of the affair for the first time, and they said flatly that they did not believe the story. They had taken shelter in a doorway during the storm, and had seen the girl do likewise, although she had not seen them. And they had seen a man come along who looked like the suspect in the case, but this man had not seen the girl or come near her.

The bartender, a good citizen, passed this story on to the police, who questioned the two men. Their story sounded true and checked with the hitchhiker's account of himself. Then they questioned the girl again. She soon admitted that the whole thing was a fake, and told the police where she had thrown her employer's pocketbook and where she had hidden the five dollars.

Do not get the idea that things like this happen often; they are very exceptional cases which the police take great care to guard against. When perjury is discovered all the agencies of the law—police, prosecuting attorneys, and courts—become more careful than ever about deciding any man's fate entirely on the testimony of a witness. The police especially increase their efforts to get as much evidence as they can with which to check the witness's word.

Even when there has been a confession the police try to get as much supporting evidence as they can. Usually the first step is to re-enact the crime. This is done for a number of reasons. In the first place, some states do not permit a person to plead guilty to a first-degree murder; so the police must prepare the evidence for the prosecution just as if the suspect had denied everything.

Then there is always the possibility of a false confession. A prisoner may make such a confession for different reasons. Perhaps he thinks that he can prove an alibi when his case comes to trial, and he is willing to stay in jail in the meantime for protection or for

other reasons of his own. Or he may choose to be punished for a crime which he did not commit in order to avoid being suspected of another and much more serious one of which he is actually guilty.

So the crime is re-enacted. Any guilty man who is sincere in his desire to confess can re-enact his crime so perfectly that there will be no question about his telling the truth. In one famous case, for example, the police were sure they had the right man, but they did not see how it had been possible for him to get into the building where the crime had occurred. The suspect settled their doubts by climbing a flat brick wall. He was a "human fly."

If there is some missing evidence—a piece of stolen property, a gun, or any of a hundred other things—re-enacting the crime will frequently bring it to light. When this happens the confession is shown to be genuine, and the chain of evidence is completed.

Silent witnesses may also identify a suspect and call forth a confession; but they have the same dangers as human witnesses. Without other evidence to check against them they may cause a miscarriage of justice. A Cincinnati Negro came very near to being executed because his gun—he freely admitted it was his—was proved to be the one from which a fatal bullet was fired. He was tried and convicted of first-degree murder; but the police, not satisfied with the evidence in the case, kept on investigating. It finally was proved that the convicted man's brother had borrowed the gun, shot the victim, and replaced it.

Suppose that a suspect when faced with a human or a silent witness to a crime, or, for example, with witnesses who swear to his possession of property taken in the crime, still does not confess. The next step is to confront him with further evidence in the hands of the police, evidence which may come as a complete surprise to him. In many cases, of course, the police have had such evidence all along but have held it back so that by springing it on the suspect after he thought the case against him was complete, they could surprise him into a confession.

But in other cases this final bit of evidence against a suspect may not be obtainable until after his arrest. Suppose the police have quite enough evidence from the scene of a crime to identify a suspect completely—say a set of fingerprints. If the fingerprints match those already on a police file they can pick out their suspect at once. But if they do not match any on file the police cannot go out looking for a man whose fingers bear the same pattern. They have to wait until suspects arrested because of other evidence are brought in. Then the fingerprints of each can be compared with those found at the crime scene. When the prints of a suspect can be matched, the fact is usually enough to bring about a confession, but it is evidence which by the nature of it had to be withheld till the last.

Fingerprints are the standard means of identification and probably always will be. But in the last ten or fifteen years police have found that these telltale

marks are not left around as much as they used to be, at least by professional criminals. However, the criminal usually leaves something. What the police have to do is to find that something—that silent witness—and, if possible, identify the suspect by showing that it is just as much his as are his fingerprints.

The work of finding these silent witnesses and using them to identify a suspect has been so developed that it has earned the title of scientific investigation and identification. We have already looked into the work of investigation. The work of identification is no less interesting.



## CHAPTER XIV

### THE ART AND SCIENCE OF POLICE WORK



**T**IME, which changes everything, has lately been at work on the old saying that catching criminals is an art, not a science. Not that there was not, and is not, a great deal of art in the business of catching criminals. Knowing where to look for suspects, predicting accurately what route a fleeing criminal will take, fitting together jigsawed pieces of evidence, asking the right questions in the right way—these and a hundred other things have to be done with just the right touch.

But modern criminal catching is both an art and a science, with one about as important as the other. In fact, the work you hear most about in police circles these days is scientific criminal investigation and identification.

Contrary to a widespread notion, police departments have been using test tubes and microscopes more than fifteen years. It took plenty of looking through a microscope to determine, first, that no two fingerprints are alike, and then to develop a system of classification so that fingerprints could become the standard means of criminal and civil identification. All this was accomplished before 1900. The use of microscopes to detect forgeries, and of test tubes in cases of death by poison also became common practice before that date.

Yet it was not until ten or fifteen years ago that the police started using scientific methods in all kinds of criminal cases. For one thing, some tests that are now rather commonplace had not yet been discovered. Blood grouping is a perfect illustration. Before the discovery in 1914 of blood grouping, blood transfusions were impossible. It was known that there were different kinds of human blood, and that a blood transfusion might itself cause death if the donor's blood were a different type from that of the patient. But nobody knew how many different kinds of blood there were, nor was there any simple test available for showing just how one man's blood might differ from another's. A great many practical problems that once were baffling have been easy to solve since scientists found that there are only four types or "groups" of human blood—A, B, O, and AB—and also that anybody's blood can be "typed" by means of a simple serum test.

To the medical profession blood grouping made blood transfusions a perfectly practical, routine matter. Now in very general use, but practically unknown during the World War, transfusions have saved thousands of lives. To the police profession blood grouping has made possible the solution of many puzzling cases.

Roger Douglas was sitting in a chair in the living room when the Michigan State police got there. His face, his hands, and the floor all around his chair were covered with blood. He was conscious, but his wife, who was lying on a near-by couch, was not. Nor did she ever regain consciousness between that moment and the instant of her death ten days later. Douglas's story was that his brother-in-law, intent on robbery, had attacked both him and his wife with a poker.

Ten years ago Douglas might have made that story stick. But while he was in the hospital the police were investigating. They found that some of the blood on Douglas's clothing, all of the stains on a knife found in his pocket, as well as those on the floor around his chair, were not his, as he claimed.

On the contrary, these stains were made by blood in the same group as his wife's. They also found, after Mrs. Douglas died, that Douglas's account of how she had said, "He hit me!" when her brother attacked her, was completely false. Medical examination showed that the blow in question had destroyed her power of speech, so that she could not have

spoken a word. Two months later a jury convicted Douglas of manslaughter in connection with the death of his wife, and he was sentenced to the penitentiary.

Furthermore, it is only within the last fifteen years that the police have had the benefit of the time, the skill, and the money necessary to apply scientific methods to catching criminals. So long as the police could adapt the results of medical research—like blood grouping—to their own problems, they were fortunate, because there is a tremendous amount of study going on in connection with the science of medicine. But when it came to lie detection, or the examination of dust, or the comparison of bullets with guns from which they might have been fired, the police were up against it. These problems were exclusively police matters, and their solution therefore depended on research by the police themselves or by persons interested in improving police work.

In 1920 scientific research on police problems was practically nonexistent. But in the following eighteen years both private and public funds have produced extraordinary results. Accidental deaths or supposed suicides have often turned out to be murders; suicide notes have been shown to be forgeries. What looked like accidental fires have turned out to be arson cases which have been solved when particles of inflammable materials used to set them have been found sticking to a suspect's clothing. Guns which murder or robbery suspects claimed had not been

fired for months have been shown by chemical analysis to have been used at about the time of the crime.

Bullets which caused death have been traced to individual guns by inspection under comparison microscopes. Tools belonging to suspected burglars have been shown to have peculiar nicks and grooves which were found in marks on window frames. Bits of metal from bombs have been examined by microscope and tested chemically, resulting in arrest of the bombers. Dust particles from clothing or shoes, when placed under a spectograph, have conclusively proved the presence of a suspect at a crime scene. And so on.

Besides making a laboratory a permanent part of the police system—a thing that has already been done by a number of city and state police departments—the police are continuing to depend on experts in many fields. In the Lindbergh case, for instance, the police called in an expert on wood grains from the Forest Products Laboratory, maintained jointly by the United States Department of Agriculture and the University of Wisconsin, to identify the ladder used by Hauptmann. As science continues to provide knowledge and develop methods that can only be used by a person with special training, the police will depend more and more on experts, in whatever field they may be found, to help them with extremely specialized problems of identification. Recognizing this need for outside help, the State of New York has appointed a staff of twenty-four special consultants to

assist police laboratory staffs when occasion demands.

Once scientific identification had proved itself in major crimes, its use began to spread, until now it is rapidly becoming standard practice in all types of crimes. There was a hamburger stand proprietor, for instance, who reported to the police that a pin-ball game had been stolen from his place of business. The story did not quite ring true, so the police asked him to let them look at his car.

On one of the back doors of the black sedan they found some red paint stains. These were scraped off, taken to the police laboratory, analyzed, and compared with some similar paint scrapings from another machine which the complainant had identified as the twin of the one that had been stolen. The scrapings were identical, giving the police very good grounds for believing that the proprietor had stolen his own machine. He admitted it.

Then there are the cases—quite a number of them by now—of burglary suspects who have been positively identified by threads from their clothing which they unknowingly left behind. In one of the most famous the police case was based purely on circumstantial evidence—but what evidence! In the first place, microscopic examination of some threads from the burglar's suit showed that there were nine separate and distinct types of fibers present. These same nine types were found in the suit worn by the suspect when he was arrested. Secondly, when the prisoner's shoes were examined—fortunately he had not worn

them since the burglary—eight different types of fibers were found clinging to one sole. These same eight fibers were found in the rug which the burglar had trod in the course of his crime.

Chief by-product of the scientific identification process has been an increasing proportion of confessions. One reason for this trend is the cold logic of facts produced by test tubes and microscopes, besides the suspect's surprise at being caught so exactly. The other reason is the natural human desire to get off as lightly as possible. In the face of evidence as clear-cut as in some of the foregoing cases, many criminals prefer to plead guilty in the hope of getting easier sentences. The police are welcoming this by-product. It means lower costs, less time and money spent helping to prepare cases for trial, and greater certainty that the guilty will be punished.

On the other hand, no development in police history offers more protection to the innocent than scientific evidence. Tests in the laboratory of the Federal Bureau of Investigation at Washington proved the innocence of a young murder suspect in far-off Alaska in one of the most famous cases of its kind. A prospector had been killed by a rifle bullet, and everything pointed to an ex-convict. He had been seen near the place where the crime was committed, he had a rifle of the same caliber as the fatal bullet, and he had blood on his clothes. Also suspected, but only because of the caliber of his rifle, was a young Eskimo boy.

Things looked bad for the ex-convict; a few years ago he might have been convicted. But the evidence—the two rifles, the fatal bullet, and the bloodstained clothes—was forwarded by plane, train, and boat to the F.B.I. laboratory. All doubt was dispelled by the tests. They showed that the blood was animal blood—as the ex-convict had claimed—and that the bullet came from the Eskimo lad's rifle.

So spectacular have been some of the identifications made through scientific evidence, and so wide are the opportunities for obtaining evidence by scientific methods that many people think the application of science to any case will surely bring its solution. Don't believe a word of it. All the art accumulated by many years of police experience is just as much needed as it ever was. Science simply has made it possible for the police to practice that art with a hundred or a thousand times their former keenness of sight. It is an unbeatable combination, and one the police should have every opportunity to develop to the utmost.





## CHAPTER XV

### ABOUT THE THIRD DEGREE

**S**UPPOSE that neither the statements of the witnesses nor the sight of the evidence causes a suspect to confess. What should the police do then? Use the so-called third degree, which is generally taken to mean torturing the suspect into admitting his guilt?

All truly modern and professional police officers are against the practice. They are not required to have a confession in any case. Confessions from the guilty are welcome because they save time and trouble, and because they mean greater certainty of punishment. But confessions from the innocent are worse than useless. Not only can they be disproved, but they cause confusion and delay the pursuit of the real criminals.

If the police are reasonably sure of a suspect's guilt they will question him in the hope of getting a confession. Because of stories in the papers, the movies, and the radio, the public has an extremely confused idea of how this questioning is done. As one police official says, "It's got so that the term 'third degree' is applied to any interrogation of, or conversation with, an offender or suspect by the police."

That it is the practice of the police to use "third degree" methods in such questioning is sheer nonsense. In the past, no doubt, many American police departments treated suspects brutally. That they did so was due directly to the willingness of public officials and the public alike to swear a man into the police force, give him a badge, uniform, gun, and club, and put him out on the street without any training whatsoever in police work. Police departments manned in this way might be expected to use any methods.

It takes a lot of training and self-discipline for even a modern police officer, accustomed as he is to seeing so much of the rougher side of life, to keep his own

feelings always within control when dealing with criminals; and it may be particularly hard for him to do this when the people of his town have lost all control of themselves and are shouting for the immediate arrest of those guilty of some unusually vicious crime. Under the circumstances, the modern policeman, as a rule, conducts himself very well.

But it is not only because we have a higher type of policeman today that the third degree is very nearly a thing of the past. In the first place, the courts have consistently refused to admit into evidence a confession obtained by third-degree methods. In the second place, a confession obtained in this way may include an admission of guilt, but may in its details be so far from the truth that the defense can easily tear it to pieces.

But neither of these reasons is half so important as the fact that the third degree is plainly just poor police work, and is so regarded by all up-to-date police departments. There are so many surer and better ways of getting confessions that the third degree is a confession in itself—a confession that the police using it do not know their job.

One of the simplest of the better ways is to ask the right questions, as in Gerald's case. Gerald was suspected of the criminal assault and murder of a waitress. One of the detectives, who had had a great deal of experience with sex offenders, suddenly asked the lad, "Where is your diary?"

He had remembered that keeping a diary was a

very common habit among offenders of this kind, and he put his knowledge to immediate use. Without stopping to think Gerald answered, "Why, at home, underneath the dresser." The diary gave the police all the clues they needed to solve not only that murder, but several other cases besides.

Not only did this detective know the right question to ask; he also knew the right way to ask it. The wrong way would have been, "Do you keep a diary?" This would have suggested to the suspect the possibility of denying that he did, and he would have answered, "No." Instead, the detective spoke as if everybody knew there was a diary, and so it did not occur to the suspect to deny it.

What the detective asked was a leading question, one that leads to the particular sort of answer that the questioner wants to hear. Such questions can be so effective that lawyers are not permitted to ask them of witnesses at a trial, because sometimes they practically tell the witness what to answer. But there is no reason why they should not be asked of a suspect in order to make him admit some truth that can be backed up by other evidence—in this case, by the diary itself.

Another useful method is simply to bluff the criminal into confessing. Long experience has shown detectives that the false show of courage which most criminals make can be faced down in the way any mother faces down her young son when he tries to tell her a lie. The mother makes her son look her

straight in the eye. What the detectives do is shown in the case of Edward Loder.

Edward tried hard to keep up a front. As he was on his way to headquarters, kidding the detectives about how wrong they were this time, he asked permission to roll a cigarette.

"Sure," said the inspector. "You can try to."

"Whaddaya mean—try?"

"I just mean," said the inspector, "that you're so nervous you can't roll one."

Edward had to make a show of going through with it. He tried once, twice, three times, each time spilling more tobacco and tearing more papers while the detectives watched his hands. Finally he had to give up, and by the time the car got to headquarters he was ready to make a complete confession.

Sympathizing with a suspect, being kind to him, and showing him how easy it is to tell the truth, will bring out more confessions almost than all other methods put together. When Price confessed that he had shot his landlady, the police thought at first that they had their man. He admitted that he had fired the fatal shot, but he pleaded self-defense.

His story was that he and a friend had been drinking all afternoon with Mrs. Epping. They had finally used up their entire supply of liquor, and the men had gone out for more. On this little shopping trip, Price and his friend had stopped in some bars for more drinks and had somehow become separated. Price went back to the house alone without the liquor

he had been sent to get. This so infuriated Mrs. Epping that she rushed at him with a butcher knife, he said, and he had had to shoot her to save his life.

When the police picked him up he was in such a shaky condition from the drinking he had done that he seemed unable to make any effort to conceal the fact. This appeared to be one case in which no police work was required to get a confession.

But a few days after Price had told his story and had been locked up, the police got a tip that some one else had really shot Mrs. Epping. Following this lead, they brought in a man named Albert Dakers for questioning. It was then that the real police work began.

Dakers was given a seat in the captain's office.

"Dakers," said the captain, "you look to me like a good sort of fellow. I bet you have never been in any sort of trouble with the police before this, have you?"

"What do you mean?"

"Well, I mean that you've probably got a good steady job, and that you've never before thought of committing a crime. My guess is that this thing sort of got hold of you, and before you knew it you had shot Mrs. Epping. Isn't that so?"

"But, captain, I—"

"Come on, now, get it off your mind. I can see that you've been worrying about it. You've done something pretty bad, but it will be worse for your peace of mind if you try to keep it all to yourself."

"Well then, captain, it was this way. I went over

there that night to ask her to take me back and . . .”

Out came the whole story: Dakers and Mrs. Epping had lived together as man and wife for years, but she had made him leave a few weeks before the shooting. He brooded about it and finally took a night watchman's gun without its owner's knowledge and went over and shot Mrs. Epping. This happened to be on the day of the drinking party, at the very time Price and his friend were out after more liquor. He then put the gun back where he had got it, still without the owner's knowledge, and went home.

After hearing the story, the police quickly got hold of the gun and found that it had not been examined or used by its owner in the three weeks since Dakers had fired the one shot out of it. The bullet which killed Mrs. Epping was identified as having been fired from that gun.

Price had been so drunk when he got back to the house that he did not realize that Mrs. Epping, sitting in her chair, did not answer when he spoke to her. He was so drunk, in fact, that he finally went to his own room without realizing that he had been talking for quite a while with a dead woman.

The next morning she had fallen from her chair and he saw at once that she had been shot. He could only dimly remember the events of the night before; he sincerely believed that he must be guilty, and so he told his self-defense story to get off with as light a sentence as possible.

It is difficult to say what might have happened to

him if it had not been for the sound work of the police in following up every tip and getting a real confession from the true criminal by intelligent methods.

The same method that made Dakers talk also helped solve a famous mail robbery case. The solution depended on getting the confessions of two women, the wife of one member of the gang and the sister of another.

Both confessions were obtained by one detective. He found that the wife had two dogs and a canary and was extremely fond of her pets. This gave the detective something to talk to her about. He fed and watered the pets for her while she was in custody, and she was very grateful. With her confidence won in this way he was soon able to get her to tell, bit by bit, the story of the crime.

The sister required a different approach. She was a matter-of-fact person without much sentiment, and so the detective appealed to her sense of justice. On his first visit to her apartment he had seen a picture of a World War soldier on the wall. This gave him an opening for a little talk on patriotism, to which she seemed to respond. The detective guessed that the soldier might have been a former sweetheart, and that mention of him and of his service to his country was the one thing that would affect her emotions.

Whether this was really true he could not tell; but he kept on talking about patriotism. Gradually he got her to agree that it was one of the finest things in



life, and that there were other ways of being patriotic than fighting in a war. For example, it was patriotic to aid justice. Wouldn't she be patriotic and tell why her brother had come across the city on the night of the mail robbery for a five-minute visit at her house?

Yes, she would. Her brother had brought a package and put it into the icebox, telling her to keep it for him for a couple of days. On reading in the paper about the mail robbery she had examined the package; seeing that it contained \$15,000, she hid it in the coal bin, where the detective found it. The next day the brother was confronted with the package and with his sister. Not only was the evidence too strong against him but his defense fund was gone, so he told the whole story.

One of the greatest helps that the police now have in the work of getting confessions from criminals and in getting straight stories from persons with guilty knowledge, is the lie detector. This instrument measures and records very small changes in blood pressure, breathing and heart action. Tests have shown that such changes take place in the body at the moment when a person tries to avoid giving truthful answers to questions. It is something which no one can control. Though a man may look his questioner straight in the eye and answer in a steady voice, if he is telling an untruth to protect himself from punishment his heart and lungs will act up in a way that

the detector, which is attached to his arm, can record. He will be called a liar by his own insides.

On the other hand, even the most nervous person will not react in this way if he has nothing to conceal. So, by the use of the lie detector in connection with skillful questioning, the police are able gradually to break down a false story and to build up a true one in its place.

One of the best things about the lie detector is the way in which it helps protect the innocent. On one occasion a tall young man was arrested because he fitted the description of a robber who had held up a number of drugstores. He was shown to the victims of these robberies, and several of them identified him. Yet he vigorously protested that he was innocent. The police thought that he might be telling the truth and looked for more evidence.

Three things resulted in his release. First, one of the victims had banged a drawer so hard on the real robber's thumb that he had bled all over the place—yet neither thumb of the suspect showed any injury at all. Second, another drugstore robbery took place while the suspect was held in jail. Third, the lie detector showed that he was speaking the truth when he said he was innocent.

While he was taking the lie detector test this fellow did something which more than one suspect has done. He revealed his guilt in a crime with which the police had no idea he was connected. It was a petty theft done for revenge against a boss who had treated him

badly. Questions which purely by chance reminded him of this petty theft made his breathing and heart action abnormal. The lie detector showed this, and the police were put on the track of a crime they had known nothing about. Under further questioning he told them the whole story of the petty theft.

This was proof that, as far as he was concerned, the lie detector was working perfectly, and when questions which dealt directly with the drugstore robberies failed to cause irregular breathing and heart action the police were satisfied that he knew nothing about them. If the lie detector was right in the one case it must also be right in the other.

The lie detector works just as well in identifying the guilty directly. Forced to investigate every one of the twenty persons who had been at a party which ended in the murder of a woman, the police of Akron, Ohio, chose the victim's husband as the first candidate for a lie detector test. His first test showed that he had guilty knowledge, but he held stubbornly to the statement that he knew nothing about the murder. So they gave him another test. In the middle of it he suddenly exclaimed, "You can't beat this thing!" and made a complete confession.

Not even the strongest believers in the lie detector are yet ready to use its results as anything more than one indication that the suspect has guilty knowledge. When its evidence has been introduced in court—as it has been several times by agreement of the defense and prosecution—the only claim made is that it shows

accusation or denial to be probably true. Nobody has yet been convicted on lie detector evidence alone.

Its widest use is in starting police along the right track in preliminary questioning, and in this branch of investigation it has been of the utmost value.

As soon as the lie detector was successful in a few important cases, police departments everywhere began to equip themselves with it, and to use it as a part of routine procedure. Wichita police were among the leaders, making 3,110 tests during a recent year on 1,388 suspects. Of these suspects 990 had clear records, 3 indicated insanity, 6 were too erratic for classification, and 389 indicated deception. Among the latter, confessions were obtained from 162.

There you have all the methods used by the police to obtain confessions. The general idea is just this: Through ability developed by training the police are usually able to decide which suspect is most likely to be guilty, and through this same ability are then able to select and use the method of questioning which will be most likely to make him confess if guilty. Often he will confess of his own accord, because of vanity, or because of guilty conscience, or because he wants to protect some one else. But in the end it is usually proper police work that really gets the truth.



## CHAPTER XVI

### THE BIGGEST PROBLEM

**T**HERE, beginning with the problem of getting men to the scene of the crime and going on to the steadily increasing use of scientific methods of investigation and identification, you have a good general picture of how criminals are caught and of what a police chief means when he talks about the needs for and the uses of systems. If you live in Chicago or in New York or in any one of the country's two or three hundred other largest cities, you no doubt will

figure that your city could afford the equipment and the man power required to operate these systems. And you will be quite right.

But suppose you live within the jurisdiction of one of the thirty-nine thousand other police departments—in a smaller city, or a village, or a rural county or township, that can afford only a few of the trained men and little or none of the special equipment necessary to these systems. Then what? Crime plays no favorites, and a murder or a robbery happens just as unexpectedly and finally in York Corners as in New York City. And, under our decentralized form of government, the responsibility for solving a crime that does happen there belongs to the York Corners police and to no one else. Its three-man force will be supposed to catch a criminal just as surely as the big city police.

In considering the nation's crime problem and what to do about it, the vast number of separate and independent police departments stands out as an important fact in itself. Equally important is the number of differences in the size, man power, and efficiency of these departments.

The criminals, on the other hand, do not have to cope with any of these difficulties. They need good equipment, but they do not have to present their needs to city councils, or to depend on any funds other than what they can appropriate for themselves. If a modern criminal has money he can, under our present laws, usually buy all the cars and guns he

needs without the slightest difficulty. Or, if he lacks capital, he can steal his working equipment.

Once equipped, the criminal can operate anywhere he pleases. He can stay out of places that have a reputation for swift and certain justice, and he can avoid states which have capital punishment. Aside from these danger zones, he can commit a crime in any one of the nation's forty thousand police jurisdictions and then depart by airplane, automobile, train, or boat for points elsewhere. And he can stay safely in whatever place he goes to until the police in that jurisdiction find that he is a wanted man.

Here are perhaps the two biggest reasons for the nation's crime problem—limited equipment and jurisdiction on the part of the police, and unlimited opportunity to obtain equipment and to go where he wants to on the part of the criminal.

The situation looks hopeless at first, but it is far from that, for the machinery of justice is catching up fast. It has a long way to go, but it is on the road. In the first place, certain crimes have been made federal offenses as well as state offenses. Such crimes as interstate kidnaping, robbery of a national federal reserve bank, interstate transportation of stolen automobiles or of property valued at five thousand dollars or more, and theft of goods being transported in interstate commerce. These crimes are now the responsibility of the G men of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Their record has been both spectacular and effective, and is proof of what can be done when po-

lice are properly equipped and are not hindered by city limits and state lines.

The F.B.I., however, contains only six or seven hundred among the tens of thousands of officers employed by all the police departments in the country. Moreover, while its men have full authority all over the country, they can act only in certain types of crimes, as has been shown, and this is true also of the Post Office inspectors, the agents of the United States Secret Service, and officers of other federal law enforcement agencies. Responsibility for dealing with all but the limited number of federal crimes still remains with the local departments.

There is still plenty of room for improvement, but most local departments are doing a really good job of handling routine and purely local offenses. When added together, this work is tremendously important to the peace and prosperity of the country, even if it does not make the front pages very often.

Dealing with an important criminal, on the other hand, is neither a routine nor a local matter. It may take many police departments, working closely together, to capture a gang of bank robbers, a pick-pocket ring, a clever murderer or arsonist. When they are after game like this, police departments begin calling on one another for help. If Chief Jones is faced with a murder mystery in his village, he does not worry because he lacks the proper equipment, for he knows where he can borrow it.

If he wants a strongbox examined for fingerprints,



or a bloodstain analyzed, he can get that service from his state police laboratory; or he can send the evidence to the Federal Bureau of Investigation in Washington. If he needs an expert detective he can borrow one from the state police or from a neighboring city. If he wants to send out a general alarm, the state police broadcasting station or teletype system will carry his message.

It works the other way around, too. Many times the federal, state, and city police have asked for and received valuable aid from constables and sheriffs in rural counties and small towns.

In other words, police departments are forgetting their individualism in the face of a national crime problem and are linking themselves into units which over a period of years will be—and at some points even now are—just as strong as any organization under a single command. There is nothing forced about this uniting process: the departments are doing it of their own free will. And it is getting results that are making the capture of criminals a more and more effective service.

One result is that the use of any new method or device is no longer confined to the police department that discovers it. Word gets quickly to the other departments with which the first is linked, and they are able to ask the discoverer's help in adapting the new method or device to their own use.

Increasing co-operation has brought two important responsibilities. Police departments that are best able

to afford it must take the first steps in the discovery of new methods and devices—a responsibility that all the larger departments are perfectly willing to assume, for every time they develop something new and good they are improving their own department as well as helping the others.

The other responsibility belongs to every police department in the country. It is the duty of each to inform the rest of the police world of new discoveries made, new methods developed, and the results of practical tests made of such untried aids. To pass on such information is the primary purpose of the International Association of Chiefs of Police. The Association maintains a clearing house of information on all branches of police work, from which any chief can get advice on his particular problem. To its members it distributes the latest information on significant police developments all over the world.

The Association does one other important service, which only it can do. It takes the lead in those activities which no individual police department could or should carry on—the activities that benefit the police profession as a whole. Many of these activities should be carried on by the government; but in police work as elsewhere there must be a demonstration of the real need for a new service before government funds can be appropriated for it.

For example, the national fingerprint file now so successfully operated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation was started by the International Associa-

tion of Chiefs of Police and was operated by it for many years, before being turned over to the F.B.I. at its request in 1924. Likewise, the uniform system of reporting under which many police and law enforcement agencies are sending regular crime reports to the F.B.I., was developed by the Association's committee on uniform crime records. The work of this committee not only resulted in the first reliable crime statistics for the nation at large, but also has brought about improved police service in many cities through modernization of the local police records. The traffic safety division of the Association is now doing important work in assisting police departments to reduce the number of traffic accidents and the number of violations of traffic laws.

Co-operation among police departments is not the final answer to America's crime problem, but it is the watchword of today. By working together, America's police are going to win a new respect for the law during the next few years—a respect that will mean more than anything (radios and all other scientific devices included) has ever meant before to the safety of our lives and the security of our property.

END

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